

The perfect wedding proposal (at a cost)



MAN BUNS

And other things that should stay in 2015

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Your essential daily news | THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2015

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Ryan Dooks, pictured with his collection of rare and fun Star Wars collectibles, said **The Force Awakens is less about the merchandise and more about creating new memories with great friends.** AARON CHATHA/METRO

A GALAXY NOT THAT FAR AWAY

Force awakened in Calgary for new film



Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

Starting Thursday evening, swarms of fans will descend upon theatre screens in Calgary for the seventh instalment of the Star Wars franchise — which has already grossed over \$100 million in pre-sale tickets alone.

The Jedi are going to feel this one.

But while the marketing ma-

chine is already chugging away with toys, costumes and more, for Calgary fans who grew up with the original trilogy and the prequels, *The Force Awakens* is a chance for a more personal visit to their beloved galaxy far, far away.

Shawn Trainor, a local fan, grew up playing with the toys and watching the films.

"For me, personally, I was 12 when Episode I came out," said Trainor. "At the time, I loved it."

That love transformed into

nine years with the 501st Legion Badlands Garrison — the local chapter of the famous Star Wars costuming group. Trainor has been commanding officer of the chapter for the past four years — allowing him to help out charities and bring happiness to younger fans.

Ryan Dooks, member of the Calgary Star Wars FanForce, said he's become more selective with the merchandise he buys. What's more important to him is creating memories with new and old

“Sex, religion, doesn't matter. As long as you love Star Wars ... we're all friends.”

Ryan Dooks

friends — Dooks has been to seven Star Wars celebrations around the world, and is planning to see the next one in London.

Alberta not hot on pot sales

LEGALIZATION

What 'makes sense' in Ontario makes less sense here



Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

While Ontario mulls how to handle the imminent sale of legalized marijuana, Alberta still considers conversations about how to handle dope premature.

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne said Monday that it would "make a lot of sense" for Ontario's government-run liquor stores to sell marijuana. She added their stores, owned by the government, have the experience and expertise to sell legalized marijuana in a responsible way.

Although the provinces east of Alberta are considering how regulated pot sales would look, a spokesperson for the Minister of Finance — the ministry that oversees the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Corporation — said it's a little premature to be having similar talks here.

In Alberta, things work a little differently for controlled

PM'S PLEDGE

The new federal government's throne speech earlier this month included a pledge to "legalize, regulate and restrict access to marijuana," following up on a long-standing pledge by Justin Trudeau's Liberals. But it's still unclear how that will roll out.

substances: Ontario has a monopoly on liquor sales, as they operate all of the stores licensed to sell. But Alberta has an open market with private sellers in charge of their own liquor selections, hours and operations.

"From a logistics point of view, I could see how governments would look at their current infrastructure to see if they can leverage any of those stores that are already selling controlled substances," Ivonne Martinez, president of the Alberta Liquor Store Association said.

"The difference is in Ontario they own all of their stores — so they can make that decision. Here, we don't know what the government is thinking yet, we don't know if AGLC is going to be in charge of it or not."

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+ DARSHAN KANG

When Darshan Kang landed in Canada in 1970, he said he came alone, and without much in the way of support — a situation he said he's working to make sure refugees don't find themselves in today.

"When I came here, I was 19. I had no friends, no family here — just me, on my own," he recalled. "But these refugees coming here, they have so much support. They have families, private sponsors. They have a lot of support behind them."

Kang, now a Calgary-Skyview Liberal MP in Justin Trudeau's government, said Calgary has changed quite a bit, and there are more resources available not just to refugees, but all newcomers. There are English as a Second Language programs, aid to help refugees find homes and organizations providing information about education, health and finding jobs.

Kang said that given the opportunities, refugees will bring jobs, expertise, rent and buy houses and cars, and boost the economy.

"When I was back home, I used to read about the freedom struggle. I followed John Kennedy, Mr. Trudeau, Mr. Scott. I was fascinated by those people," he said, which led him, as an immigrant, to start charting a career in politics.

Kang suspects there will be 1,300 refugees in Canada by the end of the year — and that Calgarians will be very welcoming to them.

AARON CHATHA/METRO

Calgary welcomes refugees

IMMIGRATION

Family and sponsors greet dozens as they land in the city



Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

Wafa Alokla breathed a visible sigh of relief when she saw her mother, Salwa Idris' face greeting her at the Calgary International Airport.

Tears of joy streamed freely down their faces.

"It's a fine and beautiful moment," said Alokla, a mother of two boys, ages four and 12, who arrived in Calgary from Syria as refugees Wednesday evening.

The family, including Alokla's husband, were some of dozens of refugees who touched down in Calgary Wednesday, greeted with tears, cheers and warm embraces.

Idris broke down in tears when she spoke about the happiness it gave her family to finally have her daughter, son-in-law and grandkids safe on Canadian soil.

It had been two years since they'd seen each other, and a year that Alokla and her family waited to find out if they would be accepted into the country.

"I'm happy very much," said Idris through tears. "Thank you Canada, thanks Mr. Trudeau, thank you for everybody helping us."

Nourchan Osman, a friend



Wafa Alokla (left), tearfully embraces her mother, Salwa Idris, upon her arrival in Calgary as a refugee. LUCIE EDWARDSON/METRO

of Alokla — they hail from the same village near Damascus — said after everything her friend's family and the other refugees have been through, the welcome from dozens of Canadians will make them feel very accepted in Canada.

"It'll be nice for her to see people who care about them

and care about their safety," she said.

Members of the Foothills Mennonite Church also gathered to greet a family of four their church is sponsoring.

Michelle Copithorne, a member of Foothills Mennonite Church, said they've spent months prepar-

ing to welcome the family.

"We've been organizing an apartment for them, clothing, food — so we've been working hard to make sure they've got all the things they need to survive here," she said.

Copithorne, who was accompanied by her two young sons, said this has also allowed

her kids to learn about global awareness.

"It's opened discussions about war and displacement," she said. "It's also taught them that a community is larger than their church or school — we also have a global community and we're all responsible for each other."

“Thank you Canada, thanks Mr. Trudeau, thank you for everybody helping us.”
Salwa Idris



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MUNICIPAL POLITICS

Mayor yet to ask city for help with his legal bills



Naheed Nenshi METRO FILE


Brodie Thomas
Metro | Calgary

If Mayor Naheed Nenshi wants help from the city paying his legal bills, he'll have to ask council.

But so far, the mayor hasn't submitted any requests in that regard, according to a city spokesperson.

On Tuesday, Nenshi pub-

lished an apology as part of an out-of-court settlement in a defamation case brought forward by city developer Cal Wenzel.

On Wednesday, the mayor wouldn't take questions on the settlement.

"I want to talk about this so bad, and I can't talk about it. Sorry," said the mayor at a scrum held after his address to the Calgary Chamber of Commerce.

Reporters asked several questions, but Nenshi remained silent about the matter.

City solicitor Glenda Cole explained in an email that council members can ask the city to pay legal costs if they were carrying out their duties when the incident in question took place.

The application then goes to the city's law department, and they make a recommendation

to council, who discuss the matter in camera and without the requesting councillor present.

"If council is prepared to approve payment, the motion for payment is put to council for ratification at an open meeting," wrote Cole.

Nenshi was on a call-in radio show when he made the comments that brought about the now-settled lawsuit.

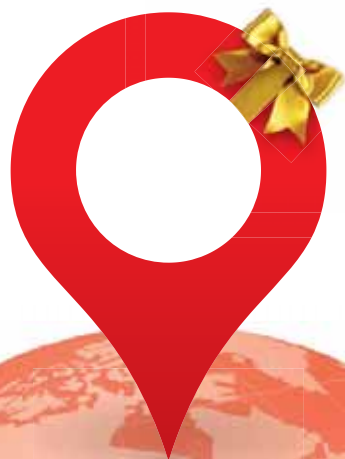
During his address to the

chamber, the mayor made a joke about the lawsuit.

He mentioned that he had recently filmed his "Mayor Nenshi Reads" segment. And then he joked that CBC personality David Gray plays the Grinch.

"I could have made a much more difficult joke right there — with a different name — but legal settlements prevent me from making that joke," Nenshi said.

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An image of the Southwood skatepark shows the bowl ripped apart. LONDON STRANDQUIST/CONTRIBUTED

Poor pour upsets city

INFRASTRUCTURE

Embarrassing images emerge of botched job at skatepark


Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

Calgary city councillor Evan Woolley is urging administrators to strive for quality over quantity, after photos surfaced last week of a botched pavement pour at one of the city's skatepark construction sites.

Images of a dismal-looking skateboard bowl at the Southwood skatepark construction site spurred groups of boarders to question the city over their contractors' experience when it comes to the art of building parks.

Now, Woolley, who has raised concerns over general contractors before, is speaking up and urging the city to reconsider projects.

"I would prefer we build less skateparks of better quality than more skateparks of poor quality," said Woolley. "They will not use them if they don't work, and this is nothing new

for skateboarding."

Two rounds of tenders were issued by the city — one with specific qualifications for skatepark experience and two others the following year — were more broad, asking for experience with water parks, swimming pools or skateparks.

Arthur Darby, a communications consultant with finance and supply, said the original Request for Tender issued by the city in 2014 had to be reworded because the bids they received were over budget.

"It was because of the cost we got in the proposals ... we have to live within our budgets," Darby said. "We haven't yet evaluated the Southwood project, we will be doing a post-mortem on that to find out what we can learn from it in order to improve our processes in the future."

Darby stressed it's a question of budget and hiring a specialized contractor for the job wasn't in the budget.



We haven't yet evaluated the Southwood project.

Arthur Darby

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IN BRIEF

Advocate again seeks changes after new report

Alberta's Child and Youth Advocate is again calling for changes to the child welfare system following the release of an investigative report about a 17-year-old girl who attempted suicide.

"There needs to be a recognition of the debilitating effects of loss and trauma on youth and how it can impair a child's success and development as they grow into adulthood," advocate Del Graff said in a statement.

Minister of Human Services Irfan Sabir added that, "We accept the recommendations provided in this report and will work with the Child and Youth Advocate to see how they can be implemented."

ALEX BOYD/METRO

Senior driver dies in head-on collision

Icy roads resulting in a head-on crash claimed the life of a woman on Wednesday afternoon.

The woman, who was about 70 years old and from Stony Plain, had been driving westbound on Highway 19 when she lost control of her vehicle, veered into the eastbound lanes, and collided head-on with a semi truck.

Leduc RCMP responded to the crash on the highway and Range Road 253 at about 3:15 p.m.

The woman was pronounced dead at the scene. The truck driver suffered minor injuries.

The woman's name is being withheld pending notification of her family.

Police are reminding drivers to slow down and to drive to accommodate the road conditions as winter sets in.

METRO



Mayor Naheed Nenshi reminded members of the **Calgary Chamber of Commerce** that the city has actually seen net positive growth in jobs since November 2014. METRO FILE

Lots of positives in economy: Nenshi

CITY

Mayor delivers uplifting talk to chamber of commerce



Brodie Thomas
Metro | Calgary

Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi tried to bring a positive message to the Calgary Chamber of Commerce during a town hall luncheon on Wednesday.

He joked that after listening to the preliminary speakers at

the event, he felt he was at the best-catered funeral of all time, and he proceeded to share a more positive view of the city.

"Investments that we together in the city have made in the resiliency and diversity of our city have paid off in ways that we don't always talk about," said Nenshi.

He said in 1993, oil and gas accounted for 50 per cent of the city's GDP. He said despite hundreds of millions of dollars in investments into the sector, that number is 30 per cent today.

"Calgary proved itself remarkably resilient, more than anyone expected. And

“If people want to live here, economic activity follows.”

Naheed Nenshi

we should've seen it. It happened in 2008 as well."

He reminded attendees that despite the headlines about job losses, Calgary has seen a net gain of 5,000 jobs from November 2014 to November 2015.

"Now these are different jobs. Some of them are part time. Some of them don't pay

as much as the energy sector," said Nenshi. "But when you think back — those of us who have been here a long time — about these cycles, at this point in the cycle we're certainly better off than what we should be."

Nenshi pointed out the cranes that can still be seen all over Calgary's downtown. He said many developers are betting hundreds of millions of dollars on the city's ability to bounce back.

Nenshi also said he likes to head out around the city, and he's hearing from retail shop owners that they're still going strong.

WEATHER

Crashes follow snowfall



Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

It was slippery out there, but nothing out of the ordinary considering the blast of snow that blanketed the city — whereas some areas saw as much as 20 centimetres — overnight on Wednesday, according to Calgary police.

And with slipperiness comes car crashes.

There were 167 reported crashes from midnight until 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, police said. Out of those collisions, 10 people were injured and 157 others were left unscathed, according to Sgt. Kelly Todd.

One person was driven to hospital for precautionary reasons, he added.

"We've had 41 (collisions) in the last hour," he said. "It's still slippery out there. Obviously it's Calgary in the winter time."

Brittany Kustra, spokesperson for roads with the city, said crews should expect to finish working on major roadways near the end of Wednesday night.

"There was more snow than what meteorologists were predicting, but we always have crews ready," she said.

Once the major traffic arteries — Deerfoot, Crowchild, Glenmore, etc. — are complete, the city will work on secondary roads, she said.

"Expect to see us working throughout the rest of the week," Kustra said. "We're asking people to slow down and make sure everyone drives safely."

Todd said people were driving relatively well Wednesday morning, but the number of collisions increased a little more Wednesday afternoon.

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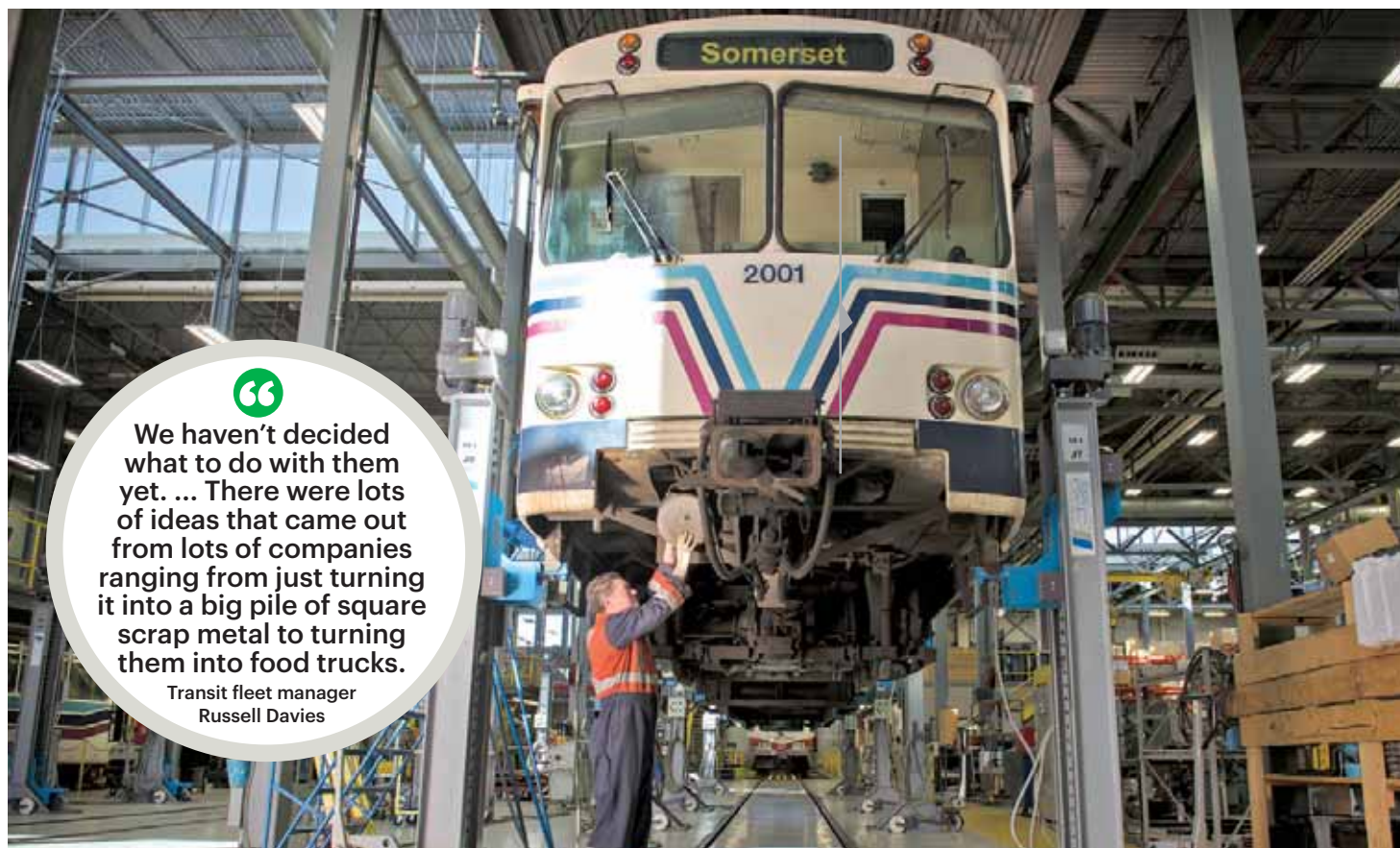
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Saying bye to city's first CTrain car

With new four-car models being rolled out, some of the city's vintage models are being retired. Here's a look at one of the oldest.



“

We haven't decided what to do with them yet. ... There were lots of ideas that came out from lots of companies ranging from just turning it into a big pile of square scrap metal to turning them into food trucks.

Transit fleet manager
Russell Davies

FACTS AND FIGURES

Did you know?

1 Windshields

The car has original windshields; the windows have been changed out once over, plus seven windows were swapped out because of vandalism.

2 Mileage

The car has travelled more than 2,778,500 kilometres — that's about 7.22 times the distance between the Earth and the moon.

3 Tires

The car has had 44 new tires, and they have been machined 17 times.

4 Maintenance

In its lifetime, car one has had 514 routine maintenance inspections.

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

The white cars with fuchsia and blue striping that zip along transit tracks are on their last legs and replacements are coming soon — but before the colourful relics come to the screeching halt of retirement, the city has some time to pause and look back on

the first trains that ruled city tracks since the inception of Calgary's CTrain.

Meet car 2001, or as transit fleet manager Russell Davies likes to call it, “car one.” This is the oldest model in transit's fleet. It's been in service for a total of 35 years, and yes, it still carries commuters today.

“It's lasted pretty well,” Davies said. “Although it's a 30-year-old train it's probably

a 60-year-old design.”

This fleet of cars first came to Calgary in pieces from the Siemens factory in Germany. They took three to four months to assemble and had a fleet of engineers sent from the factory to help put the puzzle together.

“It was quite a lot of work to do,” he said. “The final assembly of the car actually happened here down at Anderson garage, where they did the final

assembly, put the wheels on, the bogies on.”

Davies said the vintage cars will still be in commission for at least a year while transit works out the kinks with the modern additions.

Then, just like the high floor buses, he said they will have to decide how to proceed, either selling the old cars off for parts or to buyers for a handful of different uses.

“We haven't decided what to do with them yet,” he said. Davies explained that the bid proposal when they were requesting the vehicles included a brainstorm on what to do with the old ones.

“There were lots of ideas that came out from lots of companies ranging from just turning it into a big pile of square scrap metal to turning them into food trucks, turn them

into bike racks — all kinds of weird and interesting things.”

He added it would be a shame not to keep car one in commission — for special occasions, of course.

“We'll probably keep one somewhere,” Davies said “We've talked about a lot of stuff ... Take all the heavy bogies off it, put cartwheels on it and drive it around the stampede track or something.”

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DRUGS

Alberta offers fentanyl education grants

The Government of Alberta is taking something bad and giving it a positive spin.

The office of the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General announced Wednesday that they would be enacting proceeds of crime grants, which are supported with funds forfeited to the province following federally prosecuted criminal code offences.

The grants are available to police agencies throughout

the province and help fund police drug prevention and awareness programming with community partners.

"Recent deaths in our province have highlighted the tragic consequences of street drugs and just how dangerous fentanyl can be," said the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, Kathleen Ganley, in a statement.

"These grants will help our law enforcement partners in-



All Albertans deserve to live in safe and resilient communities.

Kathleen Ganley

crease awareness about the dangers of fentanyl and other street drugs through prevention and awareness initia-

tives. All Albertans deserve to live in safe and resilient communities."

The Proceeds of Crime Fund is a joint provincial-federal fund directed specifically at law enforcement for activities relating to crime prevention and drug education. The total funding available is \$220,000, with a maximum of \$20,000 per project for an 18-month period.

METRO

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The Calgary Parking Authority is not going to raise on-street parking rates in 2016, pending council approval. METRO FILE

City seeks price freeze on parking

RECOMMENDATIONS

East Village, west Beltline may see 25-cent fee reduction



Brodie Thomas
Metro | Calgary

Folks who regularly park in the East Village or in the west end of the Beltline may get a bit of a break in 2016.

Calgary Parking Authority has released its planned on-street parking price decreases for 2016.

The East Village and the west end of the Beltline consistently have occupancy below 50 per cent, according to the CPA. For that reason, rates are going down by 25 cents an hour, to \$2.25 per hour.

Also, parking at the James Short Parkade (Lot 40) will go down by 50 cents an hour, or \$50 a month for monthly sub-

scribers.

Mike Derbyshire, general manager of the CPA, noted these are simply recommendations. Council gets to make the final approval.

He said the decision not to raise prices was in line with Mayor Naheed Nenshi's recent move to freeze transit fares and other city fees.

"This is building off the mayor's initiative — we're proud to support that and anything that can help Calgarians through these economic times," said Derbyshire.

The two areas mentioned above are the only places that may see prices reduced throughout the entire day. Other areas, such as the downtown core, will see price reductions in the afternoon and evening.

Coun. Dru Farrell said she supports the move.

"It's a good gesture for the time — recognizing the downturn in the economy," she said. "The same as freezing transit fares, it's a way to try and keep costs low."



MANSLAUGHTER

Charges laid in homicide

RCMP have charged a woman in the death of another woman who was found injured near a reserve south of Edmonton.

Christy Ramone Crane, who was 25, was found alive on Dec. 6 near the Samson Cree First Nation.

She died in hospital the

next day and an autopsy later determined that her death was a homicide.

RCMP say following an investigation officers arrested Noreen Patricia Crane of Maskwacis, who is 43. She has been charged with manslaughter and is to appear in Wetaskiwin provincial court on Thursday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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| YEAR | MODEL | STK# | WAS | NOW | SAVINGS |
|------|------------------------|-------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2015 | CAMARO 2SS | 52114 | \$53,225 | \$39,498 | \$13,727 |
| 2015 | CAMARO 2SS | 52120 | \$53,755 | \$39,857 | \$13,898 |
| 2015 | CAMARO 2SS | 52113 | \$52,755 | \$39,444 | \$13,311 |
| 2015 | CAMARO 2LT | 52119 | \$40,440 | \$30,198 | \$10,242 |
| 2015 | CITY EXPRESS CARGO VAN | 58003 | \$28,255 | \$21,998 | \$6,257 |
| 2015 | CITY EXPRESS CARGO VAN | 58004 | \$29,410 | \$22,761 | \$6,649 |
| 2015 | CITY EXPRESS CARGO VAN | 58002 | \$28,740 | \$22,298 | \$6,442 |
| 2015 | ENCORE FWD | 59425 | \$30,435 | \$24,198 | \$6,737 |
| 2015 | ENCORE AWD, 1SB | 59418 | \$32,340 | \$25,432 | \$6,908 |
| 2015 | ENCORE AWD, 1SD | 59421 | \$36,405 | \$27,710 | \$8,695 |
| 2015 | ENCORE AWD | 59427 | \$32,340 | \$25,598 | \$7,342 |

| YEAR | MODEL | STK# | WAS | NOW | SAVINGS |
|------|---------------------------|-------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2015 | LACROSSE AWD, ULTRA LUX | 59105 | \$53,090 | \$41,398 | \$11,692 |
| 2015 | REGAL GS TURBO, AWD | 59005 | \$51,745 | \$38,604 | \$13,141 |
| 2015 | SIERRA HD SLE 4X4 DBL | 57042 | \$58,365 | \$42,198 | \$16,167 |
| 2015 | SILVERADO HD 1LZ 4X4 DBL | 55001 | \$65,605 | \$47,607 | \$17,998 |
| 2015 | SILVERADO HD 1LZ 4X4 CREW | 55091 | \$68,935 | \$49,698 | \$19,047 |
| 2015 | SILVERADO HD 1LZ 4X4 CREW | 55086 | \$69,525 | \$49,798 | \$19,727 |
| 2015 | CORVETTE 3LT COUPE | 52023 | \$87,470 | \$79,498 | \$7,972 |
| 2015 | CORVETTE Z51 3LT | 52036 | \$85,120 | \$77,898 | \$7,222 |
| 2015 | CORVETTE 3LT COUPE | 52040 | \$83,890 | \$76,698 | \$7,192 |
| 2015 | CORVETTE 3LT CONV | 52041 | \$87,490 | \$79,698 | \$7,792 |
| 2015 | CORVETTE Z51 COUPE | 52042 | \$84,700 | \$77,402 | \$7,298 |

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An ambulance waits outside the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton on Tuesday.

KEVIN TUONG/FOR METRO

Response to rural areas to trail cities

DOCUMENTS

Consistent ambulance service needed in Alberta: MLA



Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Edmonton

Rural communities can likely expect longer ambulance response time standards than their urban counterparts, according to documents obtained by Metro.

Metro requested documents earlier this year related to Alberta Health Services' efforts to set response time standards for ambulances and found it has planned four separate levels of response time.

An email, from March this year, stated urban centres should

expect ambulance responses within eight minutes, 50 per cent of the time and 12 minutes, 90 per cent of the time. Towns with less than 3,000 people should expect a 10-minute and a 15-minute target.

Rural areas would expect response within 20 minutes half the time and within 40 minutes 90 per cent of the time. Remote areas would expect responses within 40 minutes half the time and 75 minutes 90 per cent of the time.

The email indicates AHS wants a more robust "dashboard" of information to showcase other measures of ambulance response.

For the second day, AHS was not able to respond to Metro's inquiries before press time or indicate why the standard has not been publicly announced.

Wildrose MLA Drew Barnes said he doesn't accept a lower

standard for rural communities.

"There can and should be a consistent level of service throughout the province. We are all Albertans. We should expect the same service."

The documents Metro obtained identify a response time standard would be difficult to meet in rural centres currently.

"The number of resources in the EMS system is not keeping up with demand, resulting in fewer ambulances being available for emergency response in communities," reads one report.

The report goes on to say that inter-facility transfers are taking up a large amount of time for rural ambulance affecting their reliability.

Barnes said that complaint is commonplace in rural communities.

"There are many stories about how ambulance wait times have been delayed."

POLITICS

Hateful Notley poster design removed from online art store



Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

It appears the Rachel Notley bullies are still swinging.

On Tuesday, a print created by a Calgary-based designer circulated for sale online at a web page entitled society6.com.

The print depicted Notley standing at a podium in front of a poster with the word 'Count,' and her head covering the 'O,' thus revealing an offensive term for female genitalia. The image was accompanied with the



Metro has chosen not to show the offensive word in its entirety. CONTRIBUTED

hashtag reading #WickedWithhoftheWest.

When Metro contacted the

artist, Caitlyn Rowland, she explained the story behind the image was "Rachel Notley not being overly popular in Alberta."

The mugs, prints and canvases were quickly taken down after the short phone call.

This comes after repeated threats against the premier have been surfacing online, some even being monitored by the RCMP on Facebook.

In a statement about the hate attacks last week, Brian Jean, leader of the Wildrose party, said these types of hateful statements "need to stop."

Network offers parents support

HEALTH

Group helps caregivers of kids with rare diseases cope

Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

It can be an isolating experience to be a parent of a child with a rare disease, but one Calgary mom said she's found an organization that gives her the chance to have a community.

Rachel Martens' son Luke is nine years old and suffers from a disease called mosaic trisomy 22. She said when he was born, she was given some overwhelming numbers to grapple with.

"Numbers were around one in 30,000 to 50,000 of someone even existing with this kind of diagnosis," she said.

Martens said a geneticist pretty much handed her a stack of medical journals and told her good luck.

"You're probably going to know more about this than I will at the end of the day," they told me," said Marten.

She said as a parent she felt out of her element. "It's overwhelming, and there really is no model for care in terms of how to cope with a rare diagnosis," said Martens.

But recently Martens learned about the Parent2Parent resource network, a local peer support group for caregivers and parents of children with rare diseases, offered by the Rare Disease Foundation.

"It's uncommon for someone to come to the group and find someone with the same disease or condition; however, what they do discover very quickly is they share a lot in



Rachel Martens' nine-year-old son Luke was born with a rare disease that affects one in 30,000-50,000 people.

JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

common with the people who are there," said David Cox, executive director of the Rare Disease Foundation. "It's a complex, frustrating, expensive, time-consuming process, but they're all on the same path."

In partnership with the genetics department at the Alberta Children's Hospital, Martens has begun hosting Parent2Parent meetings and information sessions.

"My job is finding connections between organizations in Calgary that can help better situations like this with families, so they don't feel that sense of isolation," she said.

"Instead it can be, 'I know there are several other families who have rare diagnoses they are dealing with,' and there's a sense of camaraderie in that.

For more information visit rarediseasefoundation.org.

SCHOOLS

Man with hatchet faces charges

A man that police say had a hatchet hidden in his coat when he was arrested inside a southern Alberta elementary school is facing charges.

Police say they were called to Mike Mountain Horse School in Lethbridge, where a man was reported to have walked in and indicated he was being chased.

The school was locked down, and staff were able to contain the man in an empty

room until he was arrested.

There's no word yet on why the man was at the school, but police say he may have been under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Several charges are pending, including possession of a weapon dangerous to the public.

Police are not identifying the 37-year-old suspect until charges are officially laid.

Wendy Fox, associate super-

intendent of the Lethbridge Public School District, says no one was hurt and the lockdown was simply a precaution.

"School staff in the office felt that it would be important to contact the police because there was an indication there might be a weapon on this person," she said Wednesday.

"There was no threat made to the students or the school."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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NE123C115



University of Calgary student Keen Kok still uses the Hexall Bridge underpass in the city's northwest. BRODIE THOMAS/METRO

Underpass unsafe: Cyclists

HEXTALL BRIDGE

City to release plans for a fix in the new year



Some cyclists in Calgary's northwest are wondering when

the city will get around to fixing a key section of the cycle pathway system in the area.

Cyclists say the Hexall Bridge underpass is a safety hazard, and both cyclists and pedestrians continue to use it, even though it has been gated.

The underpass suffered significant damage in the 2013 flood.

University of Calgary student Keen Kok bikes in the area regularly. There's a well

worn pathway on one side of the gate that is keeping the underpass closed.

"When it's icy, you're gonna hit the rails, especially if you don't anticipate anyone coming," he said.

Technically the underpass is closed and gated but pedestrians and cyclists still use it, rather than crossing above with traffic.

Anna Blaxley, communications strategist with parks, said

in an email that the city has been working with the province and engineering consultants to design a new pathway.

"Our intent is to design a structure resilient to future flood events. We are near the end of that process. Detailed designs are expected early in the New Year."

She said it's anticipated the work could start in July 2016 and be complete by that October.

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CULTURE

Residents engaged with arts: Survey



Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

It seems Calgarians really do like the arts.

According to a survey by Calgary Arts Development (CADA), 87 per cent of citizens said they're engaged with the arts in some way.

In September 2014, CADA commissioned Stone-Olafson to do market research about Calgarians and their attitudes on the arts. More than 1,000 citizens took the online survey.

Sixty-four per cent were engaged in two or more ways, and 70 per cent said they attended some type of arts activity or event, which includes visiting a gallery, or attending a performance, concert or festival.

"It's giving us a more robust picture of how they are actually engaging with and identifying the arts," said Emiko Muraki, director of community investment and impact with CADA. "It affirmed some of our beliefs that Calgary has a vibrant arts and culture scene."

The survey found 89 per cent of Calgarians said they think everyone should learn something about the arts, and 83 per cent said it's important for

children and young people to partake in the arts.

In fact, younger Calgarians — those under 35 — tend to be more engaged with the arts, the survey said. Newcomers also engage with the arts at higher levels — something that shows that art aligns with cultural diversity.

Though Calgarians generally have a positive perception on the arts, Muraki said CADA and other organizations can do a better job to promote the arts.

"There is lots to be proud about, and it's our role to share what's happening to Calgarians," she said.

The survey also found 59 per cent of Calgarians have created something in the past year, and many participants said art can benefit communities by bringing people together.



Seventy per cent of Calgarians said they attended an arts event this year. METRO FILE

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IN BRIEF

Energy firm fights order to truck in water for farm

An Alberta energy company is fighting an order to truck water to a family farm the company admits it has contaminated with chemicals from its gas plant.

Bonavista Energy is asking the Alberta Court of Appeal to overturn the ruling from the Alberta Energy Regulator.

The regulator ordered Bonavista to provide water to a dairy farm near Edson where ground water has

been badly contaminated by a leaching solvent.

Bonavista acknowledges the chemical is from its plant. But it says it has done enough by drilling two new water wells on the farm, even though those wells produced water that was unfit for use.

A lawyer for the farm family calls Bonavista's challenge of the order an attack on the regulator's ability to use environmental legislation.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

I do ... need help proposing

MARRIAGE

Startup helps romantics pop the question in fantastic ways



Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

The clouds give way to an isolated valley of peaks as the helicopter you're in — with your girlfriend or boyfriend — glides gracefully to a nearby mountaintop.

The sun sets over the horizon, like something out of a painting.

Once you land, a picnic is set up for you — complete with champagne and a romantically charged atmosphere.

Just before the sun gives way, you get down on one knee, pull out the ring and pop the big question.

The situation is so picturesque, no one notices the photographer, videographer and two women silently pulling the strings nearby.

A new Calgary startup called One & Only aims to make your perfect marriage proposal go off without a hitch — by organizing the event from start to finish.

"Basically, when you're sitting at a table 40 years from now, your grandkids aren't going to ask you about the wedding day," said Alyssa Fischer, co-founder. "They're going to ask how Grandpa proposed."

The company is the brainchild of self-confessed hopeless romantic Sibyl Bigler — who launched it with Fischer, who is more of a realist.

"We're both in marketing, we've both planned events, but our hearts and souls are into making other people happy," said Bigler.

The process begins with an email and a questionnaire. Then the duo sit down for a one-on-one consultation. Fischer said they try



Sibyl Bigler and Alyssa Fischer have launched a company that organizes the big move from start to finish. AARON CHATHA/METRO



All you have to worry about is what you're going to say.

Sibyl Bigler

to customize each experience as much as possible.

The mountain helicopter proposal is on their higher tier of proposal packages, but Bigler said she also loves the scavenger-hunt option they offer, which takes couples through the city with

the help of local businesses who have partnered up with them.

"If you like pho, there's obviously going to be a pho stop along the way," she explained. "Or, if your first date was at the Calgary Tower, we would make sure we stop at the tower."

Each and every step is orchestrated by Fischer and Bigler, who are on-hand but out of sight during the proposals.

"All you have to worry about is what you're going to say," said Bigler. "But even then, we'll help you out."

For more information, visit oneandonlyproposals.com.



PLANNERS' PERFECT PROPOSALS

Alyssa Fischer

Co-founder Fischer is already engaged and said she wouldn't change a thing about how her fiancé proposed.

"It was more intimate, because that's more my style. I'm not much of a public-proposal-type person," she explained.

"My fiancé flew to Phoenix for two days when I was there with my family. We

just took a really nice walk together, through a garden. It was really romantic. For me, it was more about that experience with that person."

Sibyl Bigler

"Hers is a little more extravagant," admits Fischer. "Which is why we compliment each other so well."

Co-founder Bigler said her perfect proposal would combine two of her favourite

things.

"I love fireworks. But then, I love hot air balloons."

"So, combining those together would be a top-notch proposal for me. Go big or go home."

Bigler clarified the proposal would involve watching fireworks from a hot-air balloon, not firing them from the balloon itself.

"That would be dangerous."

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Inviting girls to a galaxy far, far away

MOVIES

The Force Awakens being marketed to female fans

Yrol Perera-Murney loves Star Wars. That's a fact. She loves the original, the prequels and can't wait to see The Force Awakens. She's a member of the Calgary Star Wars Fan Force.

But, as a fan who was taken in by all the hype and merchandising surrounding The Phantom Menace when it was released in 1999, there's something distinctly different about the hype and merchandising surrounding The Force Awakens. It's all marketed towards girls.

"With this one, especially because there are more female characters and more diversity, they're really recognizing that there's a larger female contingent of fans," Perera-Murney explained. "They're cross marketing to females, with the makeup and the clothes, toys and costumes — it's really exciting."

Perera-Murney said this wasn't the case with Phantom Menace, where most of the marketing was aimed solely at young boys.

"When I was young, coming from an immigrant family, it was discouraged to play with boys' things," she recalled. "I was a bit tomboy. I was given dolls and tea sets."



While merchandise from older films — such as these R2-D2 and C-3PO figures — was aimed at boys, one female fan says the latest instalment is finally appealing to a more diverse fandom.

AARON CHATHA/METRO

"Back then, it was stigmatized. You're a girl, you shouldn't like Star Wars."

Star Wars became her secret passion, until she was in her 20s and could unabashedly open up.

It also helped her through a difficult time. When she first experienced Star Wars, it wasn't on a screen.

"My parents, somebody had given them the 33" story LP. We would listen to it, and I would think — that would make a great movie," she recalled.

Coming from an immigrant family, it was discouraged to play with boys' things.

Yrol Perera-Murney

Soon after, Perera-Murney's parents divorced, and it was Star Wars that helped her through it. Now, as an adult, The Force

Awakens is a revisit to that important time, not only for her but the rest of the Calgary Fan Force.

Fellow member Ryan Dooks said he's seen things change since A Phantom Menace was released as well. This year, he went to a convention in Anaheim where The Force Awakens trailer premiered. He said he couldn't believe how many people were captivated — Star Wars has become an experience thousands of people can connect through.

AARON CHATHA/METRO

FAMILY

Star Wars brings brothers together

OPINION

Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary



Toys, shirts, novels, costumes — the fandom surrounding Star Wars is as glorious as it is an unstoppable franchising beast, but for me, that's never been the hook.

Yes, as a kid I fell in love with the spectacle of Star Wars — my father claims it's the first non-Bollywood film my brother and I saw in a theatre.

As kids, it was all about Darth Vader, lightsabers, Darth Maul and the Luke action figure that fit in his speeder. We had the special editions on VHS and wore out the tapes — we refused even to fast forward past the behind-the-scenes footage included. So believe me, I know everything about the work that went into creating Jabba the Hutt.

Star Wars took on a different meaning for two siblings growing up in northeast Calgary. My brother and I are very different — I type words in English from behind a screen, where he's a globe-trotting musician, singing in Punjabi.

But Star Wars remains to this day one of the strongest bonds in our relationship.

When I made the difficult decision to leave Toronto, my home for several years, and began selling my things, my brother would call me early in the morning to watch the latest interview or leaked set picture. One morning, in my bare apartment, he excitedly screamed at me over the

phone to watch the latest trailer. It ended with words from Han Solo, "Chewie — we're home."

Suddenly it didn't feel so bad, coming home, where my family was.

When our cousin, younger than the both of us, died very suddenly in August, I remember us driving, speechless, through the city trying to sort out our feelings. We stopped to grab a burger. Not wanting to talk about the tragedy, my brother started explaining the latest theory about Kylo Ren and the Knights of Ren, and the latest on Force Awakens plot rumours. At the time, we thought it would have something to do with Luke's robotic hand. I guess we'll see.

Ultimately, Star Wars gave us the buffer we needed to deal with our grief.

When a personal relationship I was in ended earlier this year, my brother and I watched talk-show interviews of a curmudgeonly Harrison Ford; Han Solo talking awkwardly about his feelings on returning to the franchise.

Some guys talk about sports to fill those silences, and that completely makes sense to me. Football, hockey or Star Wars won't fix life's problems, but it's always there when you need a minute to step away. It's what brought my brother and me together through a huge year of change. Whether A Force Awakens lives up to our expectations or lets us down, it doesn't really matter. A galaxy far, far away has never failed to make me feel loved and at home.

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Word almost scuttles deal

PARIS CONVENTION

Canadian apologizes for error in document

A single one-syllable, five-letter word almost scuttled the Paris climate deal, and it was a Canadian who, literally, had to sit in front of the world and sort it out at the 11th hour.

Not to mention apologize for an error the United States would never accept if allowed to stand.

The apology came from Winnipeg-born Richard Kinley. Previously an official with the Canadian government, Kinley is second-in-command to Christiana Figueres, executive secretary to the United Nations-led Framework Convention on Climate Change.

This means Kinley manages the UN's climate shop, including the behind-the-scenes machinery that led to the final Paris text — version L9 — which carried the following contentious line: “Developed



Clockwise from left: French Foreign Minister and COP21 President Laurent Fabius with United Nations General Secretary of the Climate Convention Christiana Figueres, COP21 General Secretary Pierre-Henri Guignard and UN Deputy Executive Secretary of the Climate Change Secretariat Richard Kinley, during COP21, on Dec. 2. ERIC FEFERBERG/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

country parties shall continue taking the lead by undertaking economy-wide absolute emission reduction targets.”

The problem word is “shall.” In international law, that seemingly benign word creates a

legally binding commitment. But, such obligations require Senate approval in the U.S. — at least as they relate to emissions targets. If the “shall” were allowed to stay, there would be no chance U.S. President Barack

Obama could secure domestic support for the agreement.

Republicans in the Senate would vote it down, and the Paris climate change deal would fall apart.

When U.S. Secretary of State



Richard Kinley
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

John Kerry first saw the sentence he was taken aback, telling a reporter: “We cannot do this and we will not do this.”

There were two options: reopen the text for further revision, which risked having other countries step forward with other demands, or admit the mistake — in front of delegates from 196 countries.

The latter option was chosen, and it was Kinley who had to break the news that the word “shall” in Article 4, Paragraph 4 was the wrong word. It needed to be changed to “should.”

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

NORTH KOREA

Officials ask to see Lim

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau expressed “tremendous concern” at the life sentence handed to a Canadian pastor in North Korea on Wednesday, saying consular officials would work to stand up for his rights.

Hyeon Soo Lim, who pastors the Light Korean Presbyterian Church west of Toronto, was sentenced to life in prison with hard labour by North Korea's Supreme Court for what it called crimes against the state.

Trudeau noted that Canadian consular officials have not been allowed to see Lim since his detention began early this year apart from during the 90-minute trial that ended with his sentencing.

“We have tremendous concern about it,” he said. “The issues of North Korea's governance and judicial system are well known. We certainly hope to be able to engage with this individual and stand up for his rights.” Trudeau said consular officials would be pressing North Korean authorities for access to Lim. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Prime Minister Justin Trudeau participates in a town hall meeting in Ottawa on Wednesday. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Top three town-hall take-aways

Q&A

Trudeau talks ISIL, politics of hate and Vogue magazine



Michael Woods
Metro | Ottawa

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took questions from journalists and the public at an hour-long town hall hosted by Maclean's Magazine at the National Arts Centre Wednesday. Here are three notable moments.

1 CF-18s

Trudeau said U.S. President Barack Obama hasn't asked him to reconsider his pledge to withdraw Canada's CF-18 fighter jets from the fight against ISIL. "I've made it very clear that our commitment was to withdraw the CF-18s," Trudeau said. "He didn't

ask me to keep those in, nor would I have kept them in if he had asked me."

2 Donald Trump

Asked about Donald Trump's politics, Trudeau shied away from commenting directly on U.S. politics. But without mentioning Trump's name, he slammed the politics of intolerance and hateful rhetoric. "If we allow politicians to succeed by scaring people, we don't actually end up any safer. Fear doesn't make us safer, it makes us weaker," he said.

3 Charm offensive

Trudeau was asked about his charm offensive since taking office, such as posing in Vogue Magazine. "It's not about image. It's about substance," he said. "That's what so many of my political opponents haven't understood." He said serving Canadians well means listening to them and engaging in "real conversations." It also means talking to a broad range of publications.

IMMIGRATION

Integration critical to student success

A sweeping new study of immigrant students around the world shows they do best in countries that bring them into regular classrooms as quickly as possible, where teachers feel comfortable working with children of different backgrounds and where extra help is offered to families — all hallmarks of GTA schools.

The 124-page report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), to be released Thursday, looks at

how immigrant students in some 30 countries, including Canada, performed on a standardized test in the "3 Rs" in 2012, and concludes their success depends largely on how the host country helps them integrate in school.

"Immigrant students perform better and report feeling more accepted in some countries than others, which suggests education policy has an impact on integration," said the report.

It suggests the countries that

best help immigrant students move them into regular classrooms while giving them a crash course in their new language, rather than segregate them until they have mastered the language, as happens in some countries.

In Ontario, schools must place newcomers in a regular classroom for at least part of each day, noted Paula Markus, the Toronto District School Board's co-ordinator of English as a Second Language (ESL). TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

+ PRESCHOOL

Grewal said parent drop-in centres like those common in Peel and Toronto may be more comfortable than early learning or preschool programs, because they don't involve parents leaving their child, which can be traumatic for a refugee family.

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IN BRIEF

Trudeau meets with indigenous leaders

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau confesses he can't compel an apology from the Pope for the role of the Catholic Church in Canada's residential school system. But Trudeau says he looks forward to raising the matter with the pontiff. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Conrad Black endorses Donald Trump

Donald Trump hasn't received too many ringing endorsements from famous conservative elites — but he's just received praise from one Canadians know well. Conrad Black has penned a piece titled, "Trump Is The Good Guy." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Freshwater lakes heating fast



Waves crash during a November gale at Lake Superior's Government Beach in Ontario. A new study suggests lakes on average are warming much faster than the climate as a whole.

THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE/HANDOUT

CLIMATE

Lake Superior second-fastest warming lake in world: study

Our rapidly warming world has another high-profile victim — lakes.

An alarming new study says freshwater lakes are warming at more than twice the pace of oceans, and Lake Superior is the second-fastest warming lake in the world, behind Sweden's Lake Fracksjon.

The rest of the Great Lakes are also faring dismally, the study says, putting native fish in jeopardy, increasing the risk of invasive species and raising fears of widespread algae

“

It was shocking to find that over 90 per cent are warming.

Sapna Sharma, lead author of the study

blooms.

The study, by a team of international scientists, analyzed data from hundreds of lakes around the world. It found that summer surface temperatures rose by about 0.34 C on average between 1985 and 2009.

That may not sound like a lot, acknowledged Sapna Sharma, the lead author of the study and an assistant professor in the faculty of science at York University. But put that in context with air temperatures and ocean temperature increase and “you see there is a big difference,” she said.

Average air temperatures over the same period have warmed about 0.24 C, while oceans have warmed about 0.11 C, she said.

Lakes that are covered with ice in winter, like most Canadian lakes, are warming twice as fast because the lakes are increasingly ice-free earlier and for longer periods.

The Great Lakes are also facing an increase in solar radiation, another factor for the rapid warming of freshwater lakes.

The study, published Wednesday in *Geophysical Research*

0.34

Average degrees in Celsius by which summer surface lake temperatures have risen between 1985-2009.

0.24

Average degrees in Celsius by which air temperatures have risen in the same time period.

0.11

Average degrees in Celsius by which oceans have warmed from 1985-2009.

Letters, examined data from 236 lakes. Some readings came from NASA satellites; others came from data collected on the ground. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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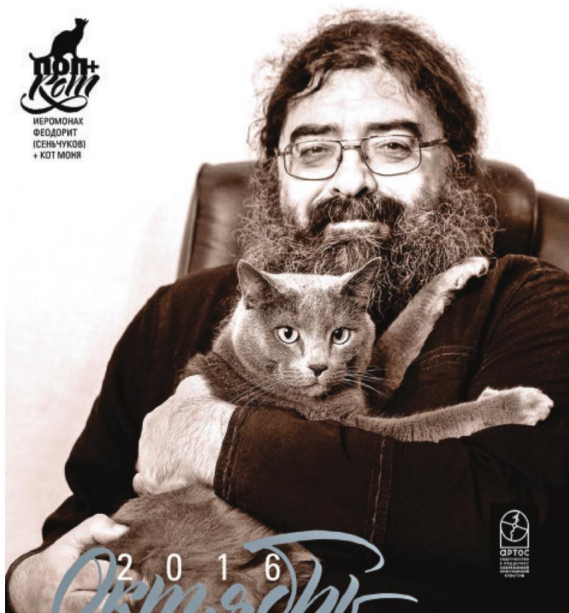


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Monk Feodorit (Senchukov) holds his cat Monya in a calendar showing an unexpected face of the Russian Orthodox Church: cat-loving priests. ANNA GALPERINA/ARTOS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pet kitties join priests

CALENDAR

Russian Orthodox Church's unusual move

A group of Christian enthusiasts has released a calendar showing an unexpected face of the Russian Orthodox Church: cat-loving priests.

The Priest and Cat calendar released earlier this month by photographer Anna Galperina and editor Ksenia Luchenko shows 12 Orthodox priests at their homes posing with their cats.

Luchenko said the idea was totally spontaneous but it can

now be viewed as a Russian Orthodox answer to the annual Italian Calendario Romano, featuring handsome young priests of the Roman Catholic Church, and the Gatti di Roma calendar filled with Rome's cats.

Luchenko said some of priests refused to be photographed, fearing that the project would be too "pop."

"To be honest, it feels a bit strange, when you call priests and ask: 'Father, tell me please, do you have a cat? Oh, you do? Great!' she said. 'So the initial reaction was a bit wary.'"

Father Pyotr Dynnikov who posed as Mr. February said he liked the idea because the calendar lends the church a lighter and less official dimension.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED STATES

Mistrial in first Freddie Gray case

The first effort to find a police officer criminally responsible for Freddie Gray's death from a broken neck in a police van ended Wednesday with a hung jury and a mistrial in Baltimore, Md.

Six officers have been charged in Gray's death. William Porter has been accused of failing to get medical help for a wounded Gray and has been charged with assault, manslaughter, misconduct in office and reckless endangerment.

It was not immediately clear whether he will face a retrial.

Gray, 25, who had been suspected of possessing an illegal switchblade, was arrested while fleeing from officers and died April 19, a week after his neck was broken inside a police van. He had been left handcuffed, shackled and face-down on the van's floor. An autopsy concluded he probably couldn't brace himself whenever the van turned a corner or braked suddenly. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FRANCE

Charlie Hebdo giving \$4M to victims

Charlie Hebdo, the satirical newspaper in Paris whose staff had been decimated by Islamic extremist gunmen and then beset by internal tensions over an unexpected influx of donations and readers, said Wednesday it will turn over all the money to victims of the three days of attacks in January.

A pair of French-born brothers killed 12 people — most of them journalists — during an editorial meeting on Jan.

7. The publication had been targeted for its caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad.

The three days of attacks, co-ordinated with a third man targeting a kosher supermarket and police-woman, left a total of 17 dead before the gunmen were shot to death in police

84

The number of countries from which Charlie Hebdo received donations. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

raids.

Suddenly flush with cash from donations and a global readership, the weekly saw tension among surviving staff, in large part over the money.

In a statement Wednesday, Charlie Hebdo said it would turn over nearly \$4.4 million US, and that the French govern-

ment had appointed an oversight committee to determine how the money would be distributed in coming weeks.

Among those deeply affected by the attacks were not just the families of the dead, but also people who had been taken hostage and wounded in the supermarket, as well as the printer whose company was shut down after the brothers holed up there for hours.

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Canada, U.S. to part ways

INTEREST RATE

BoC won't match Federal Reserve hike, expert predicts

The U.S. Federal Reserve raised its interest rate Wednesday, exerting downward pressure on the loonie that has been steadily dropping in recent months as global oil prices plunged.

The American central bank lifted its key rate by a quarter-point to a range of 0.25 per cent to 0.5 per cent, ending a seven-year period of near-zero borrowing rates.

Scott Guitard, a portfolio manager at Fiduciary Trust Canada, said climbing American interest rates will likely mean the opposite for the Canadian dollar.

He also predicts Canada's central bank will stick with

+ ECONOMY

Faith restored

Wednesday's action reflects the U.S. Federal Reserve's belief that the American economy has finally regained enough strength 6 ½ years after the Great Recession ended to withstand modestly higher borrowing rates.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

its decision to hold steady on its key lending rate even if the loonie falls further because of enduring low oil prices.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, speaking ahead of the announcement, said it was a good sign the American economy was seeing a resurgence, but promised to examine the challenges that a lower dollar poses for the Canadian economy. THE CANADIAN PRESS



COMPUTER LITERACY PUSH TO CREATE TECHIE TYKES Third-grader Jaysean Erby solves a coding problem as Apple CEO Tim Cook watches from behind during a coding workshop at an Apple Store in New York last week. There's a push across the U.S. to improve computer literacy in elementary school, and entrepreneurs are jumping aboard. But some critics warn that pushing advanced concepts on younger kids could frustrate them and turn them off computer science completely. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

IN BRIEF

Thriller scaring up sales

Michael Jackson's album *Thriller* has sold 30 million copies in the United States, making Jackson the first artist to attain 30-time multiplatinum status, the Recording Industry Association of America and Jackson's estate announced Wednesday. The album has proved even more popular overseas, with 100 million copies sold worldwide since its 1982 release. It includes hits such as *Beat It*, *Billie Jean*, *Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'* and the title track, which inspired one of the most famous music videos of all time. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Shaw buying Wind Mobile in \$1.6B deal

Shaw Communications is making its long-anticipated foray into the wireless business by picking up Wind Mobile for \$1.6 billion.

The Calgary-based telecommunications company says it will acquire the country's fourth-largest mobile operator by subscribers, pending a number of regulatory approvals, including the Competition Bureau and the Ministry of Innovation, Science & Economic Development.

Shaw expects the transaction to close in the third quarter of 2016.

Wind Mobile was formed

exactly six years ago on Wednesday as part of a group of new entrants in Canada's wireless industry, a move encouraged by the federal Conservative government to stoke competition.

Since then, telecom giant Telus was rebuffed by the government in multiple attempts to buy Wind Mobile.

Wind Mobile has run into financial problems and has had difficulty raising money for its capital investments, but a

change in its ownership structure late last year cleared the way for it to raise funds.

Shaw chief operating officer Jay Mehr said the company needed to enter the wireless market in order to satisfy the demands of its customers.

"We've always wanted, for the future of our company, to be able to deliver a complete converged network experience for consumers and businesses alike," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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The total number of subscribers Toronto-based Wind Mobile has across Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta.

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CHANTAL HÉBERT: ON THE SENATE SCANDAL (IT'S STILL ON)



“Gone are the days when the re-election of a government, the reputation of a sitting prime minister or the ascent of an Opposition leader could hang in the balance of the Duffy trial.”

It is not totally true to say that the legal travails of Stephen Harper's former star senator are no longer of any real consequence to anyone but himself. A dozen of Mike Duffy's past and present Senate colleagues have cause to wait for the trial verdict with baited breath.

They are on the list of current or ex-senators whose expense claims were brought to the attention of the RCMP over the past two years. Take Pamela Wallin, who is back in the upper house since the election. There has not been a word on where she stands since the RCMP reportedly transferred her file to the Crown prosecutors last summer.

The odds that the other senators engulfed in the scandal will be charged and/or taken to trial stand to decrease if Duffy is found not guilty of all or most of the 31 criminal charges laid against him.

That being said, gone are the days when the re-election of a government, the reputation of a sitting prime minister or the ascent of a prosecutorial Opposition leader could be presumed to hang in the balance of the Duffy trial.

At this time last year, Duffy, Harper and Thomas Mulcair were the leading co-stars in a high-stakes political drama that was deemed to have the potential to reshape the electoral landscape.

Harper is headed for political retirement, but not mostly for what the Duffy trial has brought to light.

Twelve months later, there has yet to be a definitive resolution to the Senate spending saga but the storyline has fizzled out; the audience has lost interest; the spotlight has shifted and the curtain has fallen in whole or in part on its main protagonists.

That is as good a measure of what a difference a year in politics can make.

At this time last year, Harper looked well placed to make electoral history by winning a fourth consecutive mandate. The rise to pre-eminence of the security issue in the wake of the Parliament Hill shootings had given his party a second wind. For the first time since the Senate scandal, the Conservatives were seeing positive omens in public

opinion.

That gave rise to trepidation about the upcoming Duffy trial and even talk of an early election to minimize the risks.

These days, most Harper-related speculation is of an idle variety. It revolves around the timing of his definitive departure from the House of Commons. Most expect it will come sooner rather than later. Some wonder why it has not happened yet.

For the record, there is nothing exceptional about the fact that Harper is still an MP. It may be one of the more normal features of his exit from politics. Paul Martin was defeated in January 2006 but resigned his seat only in March.

As for Mulcair, 12 long

months ago he was basking in the glowing reviews of his performance as chief-questioner of the government in the Commons.

The NDP leader was never more on a roll than over the time of the Senate scandal. It was in its wake that he came to have a larger-than-life presence in question period. He will probably go down in modern Canadian history as the official Opposition leader who will have asked the most questions of a government over the course of a single session.

A year later, Mulcair's parliamentary persona feels too big for the support role of leader of the third party in the House. In the new House of Commons, he looks like a square peg in a round hole. At least for the time being, his famous prosecutorial skills are wasted on a Liberal prime minister that too many New Democrats for comfort like better than they do their own leader.

At year's end, Harper is headed for political retirement but not mostly for what the Duffy trial has brought to light. The betting is that Mulcair — whose oratory feats on the Senate turned out to be wasted on the country's voters — will not be far behind.

As for Duffy, except among a handful of allegedly profligate senators, his ultimate fate is a matter of relative indifference.

The Senate saga was the biggest political drama of the last federal decade but it earned none of its main actors a curtain call.

Chantal Hébert is a national affairs writer. Her column appears in Metro every Thursday.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD metroview

A lengthy disruption over Katie the dog gives me hope

Toronto ground to a halt for two hours yesterday over the life-and-death drama of Katie, the German shepherd.

The north-south subway line was out of service while transit workers rescued the dog from the track rails, where she mysteriously got caught.

Media live-tweeted updates from the scene (“Did she make it?” my colleagues kept asking as they checked Twitter) and a few posted photos of Katie on a stretcher, wrapped in a bloodied blanket. For some, it was just too much.

“@680NEWS DELETE THIS INSENSITIVE PICTURE Would you post a picture of a person trapped on tracks? #topoli #Katie” tweeted @Hohummm.

“RIP” wrote another, after news broke Katie had been put down. “Very sad incident on the TTC tracks today,” the mayor tweeted.

What kind people live in this city, I thought, as a dog swallowed our short attention spans and #katie started trending across Toronto. For others, that was all too much, too.

“Shuttle buses, thousands of people having their afternoon commute ruined, for a dog,” an acquaintance texted. “Would the line have been shut for a raccoon? A squirrel? A rat?”

“What an incredible waste,” he went on. “I hope the irresponsible dog owner gets the bill.”

This is, to quote my acquaintance, an “incredible

example of something,” or perhaps two things: our capacity to care, and our capacity to care on a scale.

A few years ago, researchers tested people's sympathy for humans (adult and baby) and dogs (adult and puppy).

“The ‘winner’ was not the puppy but the human infant. The puppy, however, came in a close second with the adult dog not far behind,” Wired magazine reported, while noting that another study found people are more willing to save their personal pet than a “foreign tourist.”

This could be considered depressing, but I don't think so. First, everyone hates tourists. More importantly, a lengthy disruption over a dog gives me cause for hope.

It shows that people do care about other beings, despite the common assumption we're living in the most selfish, dehumanizing society created.

Normally, shutdowns turn trains and subway stations into sweltering hellholes. This time, they were hellholes with a heart.

And I have faith the empathy hierarchy can be manipulated.

I'm sure we'll one day learn about the superior intellect of the raccoon (perhaps even the rat) and start adopting them as pets, thus improving the likelihood we'd stall a subway to save one. Tourists, though — they're screwed.

THE MICROTREND: Battle roy-owl



The forest isn't big enough for both of them. A turf war has broken out in the Pacific Northwest, and the instigator is the barred owl. Habit degradation in the Prairies has been driving the hearty invasive species west into the stomping grounds of the northern spotted owl. And the barred owl is having a hoot out-eating and out-breeding everything in its path. Everywhere it goes, the spotted owl is declining fast: By up to 77 per cent in Washington and 68 per cent in Oregon since 1985, says a new U.S. study. Hardly a handful are left in B.C. As if it wasn't tough enough out there for a spotted owl: Development has destroyed the old-growth trees where it likes to nest and pushed it away from its favourite prey — a major problem for these polka-dotted picky eaters. The areas where spotted owl populations are sliding slowest have gotten human help with removing the nasty new neighbours. SOURCE: THE WASHINGTON POST

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Over it! 2015 edition

Spoiler alert: This is an unscientific look at some popular terms and favourite things of the year that we need to leave behind come 2016 because, frankly, they give us a headache. For your consideration and in no particular order, here they are: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

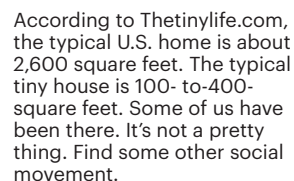
Yes, millions sold! Yes, mindfulness! Yes, beautiful flowers and geometric patterns and all manner of animal life and wonder! We now have enough things for grown-ups to colour to keep us stress-free clear through to Armageddon.



You know those often brightly coloured plastic bottles with the filter thing in the centre where you put your cut fruit and whatever else you can think of to flavour your water? Just hydrate.



They're everywhere, except maybe the majority of male heads in real life. A clip-in version is a scary little pouf.



Wayyyy back in 2013, the question was posed: is cauliflower the new kale? It's 2015, people who have just discovered baked and roasted cauliflower, mashed cauliflower, cauliflower pasta sauce, cauliflower pizza crust and fancy things to do with what is a fine thing now delicately plated in fine restaurants.



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LOST CIVILIZATION

Author Graham Hancock is back with alt history sequel

Sue Carter
For Metro Canada



Twenty years ago, when Graham Hancock's book *Fingerprints of the Gods* was first published, it caused quite the stir among archaeologists, historians and conspiracy theorists. After years of research, the U.K. journalist hypothesized that 12,800 years ago, a massive, cataclysmic comet had hit the Earth, essentially wiping out a highly advanced ancient civilization. The remaining survivors then canvassed the world, landing in such places as Egypt, Turkey and Peru, in hopes of spreading their wisdom. Some of those sages or magicians as they were known, were responsible for constructing such wonders as the Sphinx, which Hancock's book suggests actually predated the ancient Egyptians.

Although Hancock's theories of a lost civilization were dismissed by experts (he's been referred to as both a pseudoscientist and a "Pyramidiot"), readers didn't care — and neither did he. The book sold more than 7 million copies worldwide, and turned Hancock into an icon of the "alternative history" movement. He has now returned with more evidence to back up his first book with its sequel, *Magicians of the Gods*.

Hancock still has his fair share of naysayers, but it's a new generation of younger fans who showed up at his recent sold-out 22-stop tour across the U.S. and Canada. His message is appealing to younger, social-media-savvy readers, many of who are cynical about old-school power structures in the aftermath of whistleblowers such as Julian Assange and Edward Snowden.

"There is a deep distrust of authority now. It's grounded; it's not a conspiracy theory. We know that we've been lied to quite often, for example, about the Iraq War. I think those lies have devalued the currency of authority," says Hancock, who describes *Magicians of the Gods* as a fundamentally rebellious book. "It's not enough for an archaeologist to say any-

more, 'Look, I know this is how things are.' It turns people off now. They'd rather see people engage with the ideas."

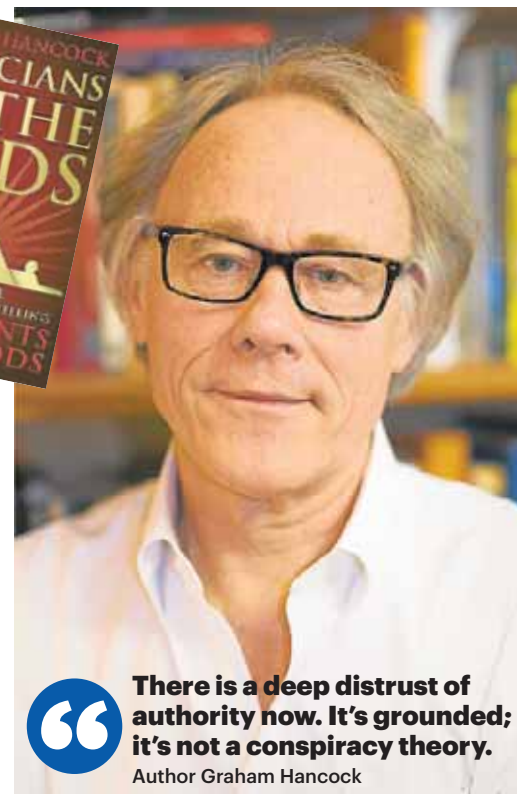
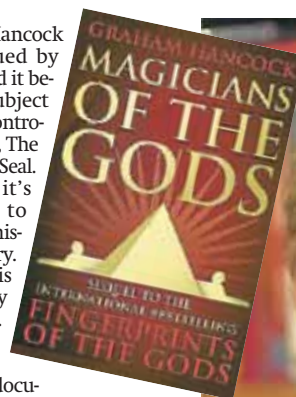
As Hancock was writing his first book, he says he couldn't "point out that smoking gun," but that within the last eight years, mainstream science journals have presented more evidence that prove his theory about the massive extinction. Perhaps the most challenging or troublesome idea in *Magicians of the Gods* is the suggestion that a 20-mile-wide fragment of the original comet is potentially going to hit Earth in 2030 — an event referred to in various cultures as the "Great Return." When asked how we should prepare for such an occasion, Hancock says that as a journalist, it's his role to report the evidence as he uncovers it, not suggest a course of action.

Hancock's background as a reporter is how he was introduced to alternative history in the first place. During the 1970s and '80s, he covered East Africa for the *London Times* and *The Economist*. While in Ethiopia he became intrigued with a story about how the lost covenant of the ark has been hidden in the country for centuries. Although experts debunked

the claim, Hancock was intrigued by the story and it became the subject of his first controversial book, *The Sign and the Seal*.

"I think it's important to realize that history is a story. And that it is often a story told by men. The further back you go, the less documents there are to draw your historical narratives from. The more it becomes a matter of speculation, and putting bits and pieces together," he says. "It's really a suggestion, an interpretation, a construing of data. I don't think it's healthy for this very important data about our past, who we are, and what we're doing here to be entrusted solely in the hands of a very small group of scholars. Twenty years ago it was enough for professor X or Y to say this is impossible, it can't be true. But that doesn't work today."

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.



There is a deep distrust of authority now. It's grounded; it's not a conspiracy theory.

Author Graham Hancock

CONTRIBUTED



A BRAND NEW COLLECTION OF VINYL CAFE STORIES, FROM THE INIMITABLE STUART MCLEAN

Dave and Morley are growing older—their marriage has mellowed and deepened like a fine wine.

Sam has developed a palate for girls and Gruyère, and Steph's found happiness with an artist who photographs roadkill.

Everyone's growing wiser and worldlier—well, almost everyone.

In this fresh instalment of *Vinyl Cafe* stories, the more things change, the more they stay the same ...

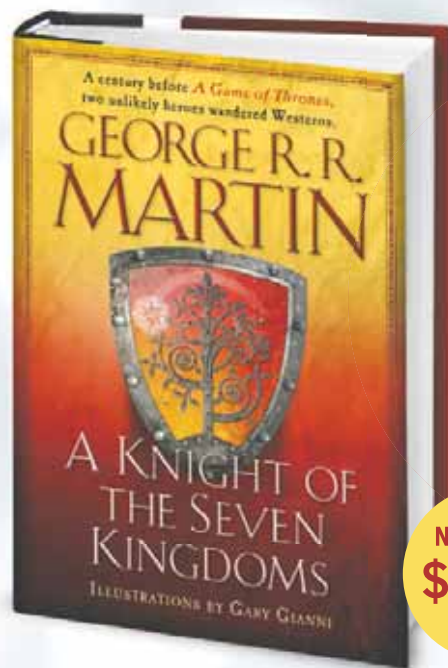


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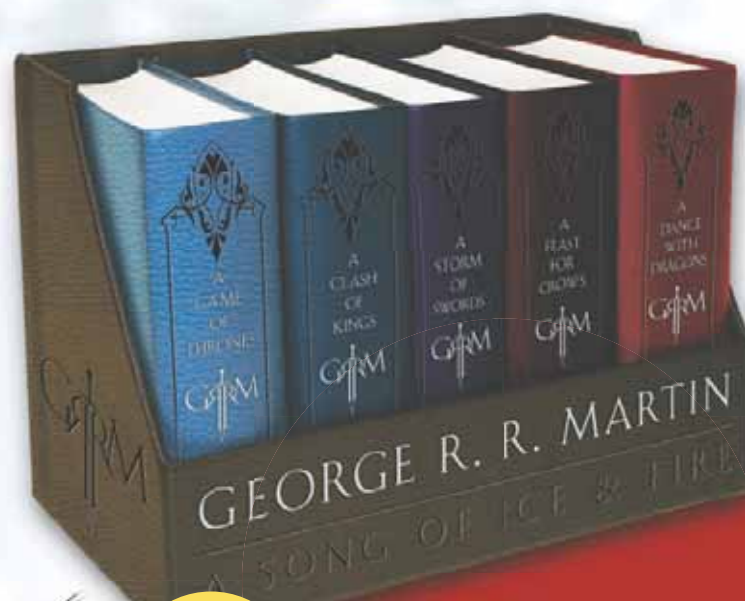
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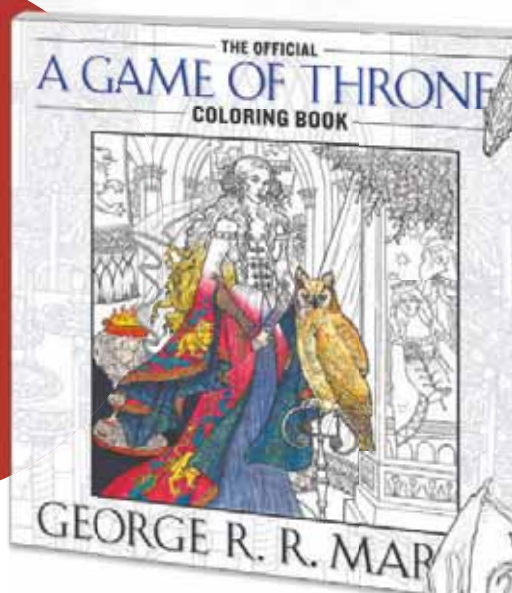
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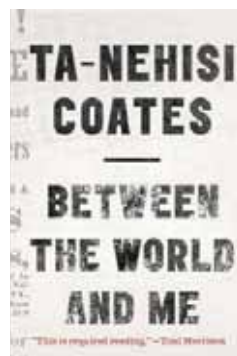
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This year's buzziest books



1 Why Not Me? By Mindy Kaling

A follow-up to her 2011 book, *Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me? (And Other Concerns)*, Mindy Kaling scored herself another instant best-seller with *Why Not Me?* Similar in style to her first book, *Why Not Me?* is a collection of laugh-out-loud essays with heart, ranging from stories about work, romance and body acceptance. Her next book will be co-authored with her ex-boyfriend-turned-friend B.J. Novak, and the two reportedly are raking in \$7.5 million for it.



2 Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Toni Morrison called Ta-Nehisi Coates' tome *Between the World and Me* required reading, and it's easy to understand why. Coates asks big, thought-provoking questions about race in America, framing it as a letter to his teenage son. In it, he attempts to explain the ugly truths about the country's racial divide, from the Civil War to present day tensions.



3 The Girl on the Train by Paula Hawkins

The Girl on the Train was lauded as "the next *Gone Girl*" by a slew of critics. It's an emotional thriller about a woman who sees the same couple on her commute to and from work each day. She builds a fictional story about them in her mind, but things get complicated when she actually befriends them. An alcoholic, she makes for an unreliable narrator, which just makes things more interesting.



4 Go Set a Watchman by Harper Lee

A frenzy erupted when it was announced that *To Kill a Mockingbird* author Harper Lee would release a new novel, her first in decades. Was she forced into it? Did she need the money? Was she of sound mind? The controversy aside, the novel, sold over 1 million copies in one week and over 3 million after a month, making it the best-selling book in HarperCollins' history.



5 Modern Romance by Aziz Ansari

The Parks and Rec star is killing it with his Netflix show *Masters of None*, but his first book, *Modern Romance*, isn't doing too shabby either: It became a best-seller immediately after its release and was praised by critics as well as fans. Similar in voice to his stand-up, Ansari shares his personal stories about dating, while asking deeper questions such as what is love? And, do soulmates actually exist?

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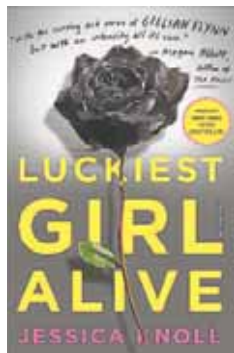


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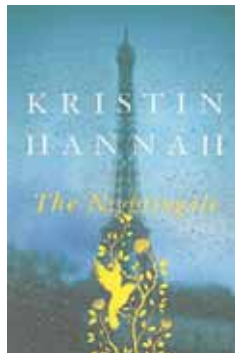
WIRELESS etc...

Whether your New Year's resolution is to join a book club or you're looking to make your commute more enjoyable, this 2015 list takes into account buzz, critic reviews and copies sold. **EMILY LAURENCE/METRO NEW YORK**



6 Luckiest Girl Alive by Jessica Knoll

Reese Witherspoon loved this young adult novel so much that her production company quickly snapped up the rights. Full of shocking plot twists, it's about a woman who seems to have it all, but there is something about her past that haunts her. The mystery stems from her teen years, when she was a misfit at a fancy private school. The book shocks all the way to the last page.



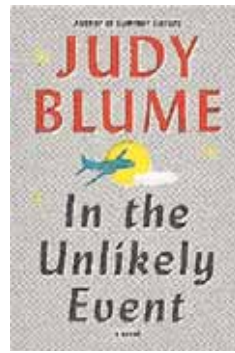
7 The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah

Taking into account reader reviews from Goodreads and Amazon, virtually everyone who reads *The Nightingale* loves it. The book centers on an elderly woman thinking about her past, specifically what it was like to be a woman in France during World War II. The book shows the hardships of being a woman during wartime, something that isn't often talked about.



8 Spinster by Kate Bolick

In the memoir that spawned dozens of think-pieces, *The Atlantic* editor Kate Bolick writes about her decision to actively choose the single life. Bolick's book also gives a history of what it was like to be an unattached woman in eras past. *Spinster* sparked a fresh debate about what it means to have it all, and raised some unexpected points.



9 In the Unlikely Event by Judy Blume

Judy Blume is widely celebrated as a young adult novelist, but her latest release — her first since 1998 — proved she has something to offer adults, too. Based loosely on the true events of a series of plane crashes that occurred between 1951 and 1952, the novel is an intergenerational family drama.

STOCKING STUFFER

A colouring book to Trump them all

There aren't many people more polarizing than Donald Trump.

His supporters show their love with pride and his haters are equally as vocal. Now there's a Donald Trump coloring book that will let you express however you feel toward the presidential candidate.

The Trump Coloring Book hits the shelves on Dec. 15.

Think he's a superhero? Color his costume red and blue, like a true American hero.

Think he's the worst thing to happen to the United States since the Civil War? Make his cape and tights an evil black and red.

The pages were created in a way that lets you make him look positive or negative.

EMILY LAURENCE / METRO NEW YORK



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JOHANNA SCHNELLER
WHAT I'M WATCHING

The emotional toll of Empire



Five other series put together won't dazzle as much as five minutes of Taraji P. Henson in *Empire*.

THE SHOW: *Empire*, Season 2, Episode 10 (City/Fox)
THE MOMENT: The Spit

Record mogul Cookie Lyon (Taraji P. Henson) is having quite the day. Award nominations are being announced, and her ex-husband Lucious (Terrence Howard) and two sons are candidates. She's hosting a concert at the prison where she did 17 years.

She's running interference for her openly gay son, who is secretly dating a woman (Alicia Keys). And she's racing to a boardroom vote, because scheming lesbian Mimi (Marissa Tomei) wants to kick Lucious out. Plus, she's doing it all in a skintight leather dress and a massive black-and-white striped fur chubbie. Just as Cookie's youngest son, Hakeem, is casting the deciding vote, who sidles in but Camilla (Naomi Campbell) — Hakeem's ex-girlfriend, and Tomei's new wife! Sporting a huge fur chubbie of her own! Camilla smirks.

She has it rigged. Cookie spits in her face.

Wowza! Five other series put together won't dazzle you half as much as five minutes of *Empire*. Taraji P. Henson alone would be enough, but then there's her wardrobe! Plus production numbers (dancers on hoverboards! Singers in gold-spiked hot pants!). Major plot twists eight times an hour! And heart-felt speeches (prison is hard on women! Human sexuality is fluid! Black lives matter!). The spit isn't even the climax of this episode: a pregnant woman gets pushed down the stairs! A man storms in with a gun! Lucious and his son become rival nominees! Every week it's like this — I collapse on the sofa so spent that I want a cigarette. And I don't smoke.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

Big Bang's big lead up

With Sheldon and Amy about to have sex on the long-running sitcom, here's a look back at key moments in their relationship. Beware: spoilers ahead. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

For nine seasons, the sexuality of Sheldon Cooper (Jim Parsons) on *The Big Bang Theory* has been a rich source of speculation.

Essays devoted to his asexuality, sexual orientation and overall social survival skills have graced publications big and small, sending viewers into a frenzy when the character finally settled into a relationship with Amy Farrah Fowler (Mayim Bialik).

Still, the couple could barely hold hands in public, let alone make out or get physical between the sheets. Until now, that is. On Thursday's midseason finale (8 p.m. on CTV and CBS), *The Opening Night Excitation*, Sheldon decides to skip the opening night of *Star Wars* to spend Amy's birthday with her now that they're back together.

His gift? Finally giving in to coitus.

"Believe it or not they have been dating on and off for five-and-a-half years now, and that was enough time for Amy to wait," showrunner Steven Molaro told Torstar News Service.

"It just seemed like the perfect culmination of their breakup story arc, especially with the upcoming release of *Star Wars*," Molaro was able to lend an insider's perspective to some of the biggest Sheldon and Amy moments on *The Big Bang Theory*, and what they mean now that the couple has officially "hooked up."



SEASON 7, EPISODE 15,

The first (real) kiss

Sheldon may have first kissed Amy to prove a point, but 11 seconds later it became clear that he liked it a lot more than he thought he would. Turns out even a man who aspired to be as emotionless as Spock can get weak in the knees. "We love these characters and they're real to us," Molaro says. "I remember when we were writing that kiss on the train, we weren't fighting in the writers' room, but there was a tension and a heat to our debating how it should play out."



SEASON 8, EPISODE 8

The first "I love you"

Sheldon may have been freaked out by prom, but he had no qualms about how he felt toward Amy. When she couldn't spit out the words "I love you," he went first with a sweet little, "I love you, too." "There was definitely some heated discussion about how exactly it should go down, but when we landed on the thought that Amy was struggling to get the words out, and that their first I love you was actually an I love you too, that seemed really interesting and appealing to us," Molaro says.



SEASON 4, EPISODE 20

The sex rumour

In this episode Amy and Sheldon decided to put a gossip theory to the test: by spreading a rumour that they had sex. "When Penny (Kaley Cuoco) tells Koothrappali (Kunal Nayyar) that Sheldon and Amy were going to be intimate, Koothrappali said, 'Shut your ass.' ... We were talking about how funny that was to us, and if there was a version of that that we could capture for when Penny and Bernadette (Melissa Rauch) tell Amy what they know about Sheldon's birthday present."

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GOSSIP BRIEFS

Lupita Nyong'o's clueless Star Wars audition

Hollywood can keep you busy, especially after you've won an Oscar for your film debut.

That might explain why Lupita Nyong'o didn't quite connect the dots when she had a meeting with J.J. Abrams a couple of years ago.

"I didn't really know what

I was auditioning for," said Nyong'o, who plays the alien Maz Kanata in The Force Awakens, the latest Star Wars film. "I guess I thought I should find work,



you know? I was so busy, I was working with adrenaline, so I went in and out. I barely remember that audition, and then two months later (Abrams) called me."

So what did this mystery audition entail, exactly?

"I remember crouching around and using my hands as a gun." Sounds... fun?

NED EHREBAR/
METRO HOLLYWOOD

Lamar Odom is 'not doing great'

Not to bum you out too much so close to the holidays, but here's an update on convalescing brothel-patronizing Lamar Odom.

"He's not doing great," a source tells Entertainment Tonight. "His speech is still slurred and he can barely walk on his own yet. He forgets a lot of people's names — sometimes even his own. He definitely has some

memory loss."

Those close to the former NBA star are still hoping for him to be "mentally fully recovered" in a year and a half's time, but the progress is frustratingly slow. Khloe Kardashian, for her part, posted a video to her

website recently expressing her hopes for the future.

"Lord knows I've had stress and anxiety lately," she said.

"This year has been absolutely horrible, but it's almost done. I'm just praying that 2016 will be better. It has to be."

NED EHREBAR/METRO
HOLLYWOOD



THE VOICE

Road getting rocky for Blake and Gwen

I'm sure it's just a total, complete coincidence that just after the latest season of The Voice ends, we get our first report of trouble in the romance between co-coaches Gwen Stefani and Blake Shelton.

Not suspicious at all, this.

So the duo, both recently divorced and involved in a "romance" that's been played up for the cameras during the most recent season of The Voice, are said to be hitting a rough patch after a backstage incident in which Shelton left his phone behind in the makeup room and Stefani witnessed a text message come in from his ex-wife, Miranda Lambert, according to In Touch.

"Gwen saw it and lost it. She found Blake and asked to speak to him privately, but he said he couldn't right then and there. She had tears

running down her face and went and locked herself in her dressing room," a source says.

"Gwen has seen texts between Blake and Miranda. She's really a mess over this."

Is she, though?

Or is this all part of the predetermined plan? When did I become so cynical?

NED EHREBAR/METRO HOLLYWOOD



The Weeknd in hot water with Bella Hadid

PARTY SCENE

The Canadian was reportedly spotted getting cozy with fans

Ned Ehrbar
Metro | Hollywood



When will people learn that parties are not the best places to misbehave? You know, because other people can see you?

Singer The Weeknd apparently didn't realize this when he decided to get with a pair of eager young fans at a private party celebrating the release of his new album — a party from which 19-year-old model girlfriend (as in she's a model and his girlfriend, not a model girlfriend,) Bella Hadid was conspicuously absent.

"He went to an after-party at a private house in L.A.," a source tells Life & Style, where he hit it off with a blonde and



The Weeknd's girlfriend, model Bella Hadid, was not present at a steamy L.A. party. GETTY IMAGES

a brunette.

"He was making out with both of them, going back and forth. Then they disappeared

into a bedroom together."

But it's totally cool, I'm sure he just wanted to explain to them in private how much he

loves his girlfriend.

Now, maybe I'm a little out of touch, but what's a Weeknd?

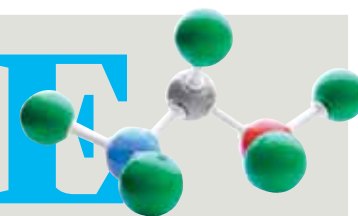
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These gifts are keepers

Today is National Regifting Day. Want to give something special that won't be passed from friend to friend? Here's a roundup of stylish gifts that promise to stay near and dear to the recipient.

Karl Lohnes
For Metro Canada



1 Decorative Red Cross Hot-Water Bottle

It's hot and looks great in a tight turtleneck — a keeper for sure! \$15, Simons.ca

2 Philips Sonicare DiamondClean, Black

Add high design and technology to his or her bathroom. The cup is also the charger, and the set includes a travel pack charger that plugs into the laptop. \$229, Walmart.ca

3 Hudson's Bay Company Multi-Stripe Flannel Sheet Set

Classic stripe and the cosiness of high-quality flannel makes the perfect personal (or selfish) gift. From \$149, TheBay.com

4 VertuoLine Evoluo Cherry Red

Get your java style on with the touch of a button. This machine makes a quality cup of coffee or a true Euro-style espresso — you decide for yourself. \$249, Nespresso.com

5 Cire Trudon's Nazareth Candle

The finest candle in the world will help keep the memories of Christmas alive well after the holidays. \$125, Avenue-Road.com

6 15x Magnifying LED Lighted Mirror with Suction Cups

Once you see your beauty magnified like this you'll never glance in a regular mirror again. \$27, Bed-BathAndBeyond.ca

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Lucky No. 13 at towns

Project overview

Christmas comes early for residents just moving into brand new Mahogany Street Towns, one of the latest developments by Homes by Avi. With Building 13 now complete and more quick possessions available in the new year, there are plenty of options for buyers looking for a Mahogany home of their own.

Location and transit

Mahogany is surrounded by a number of bus routes and is on schedule to be included as a future stop for the developing Calgary Transit Green Line. For drivers, Mahogany borders Deerfoot Trail and Highway 201, making trips across town a cinch.

Housing amenities

No condo fees are a highlight for Mahogany Street Towns — buying really means owning both home and land. Each unit is bright and spacious with elegant, estate-style architecture inside and out. Each Street Towns home also features a two-car garage, private yards and top-of-the-line appliances.

In the neighbourhood

The beautiful area of Mahogany features 74 acres of natural wetland and is home to Calgary's largest freshwater lake. Homeowners are only a few minutes away from the South Health Campus. The number of playgrounds, schools and recreation centres in the area makes it a perfect spot for families. ANNA BROOKS/FOR METRO

REAL ESTATE

Hot on the market



ANNA BROOKS/FOR METRO

1 BRIDGELAND

Book a viewing: Penthouse living just became affordable with this beautiful top-level condo just minutes from downtown. Located at #635 950 Centre Ave. NE, call 403-216-1600 to book a viewing.

2 DOWNTOWN

Open house: Visit an open house at the Marquis, a building hosting unparalleled river views right in the heart of downtown Calgary. The open house will be held Dec. 20 from 2 to 4 p.m. at #813 1108 6 Ave. SW.

3 WATERFRONT

Luxury development: Anthem Properties is now selling units at Waterfront Parkside, a luxury downtown development right off the Bow River. See the sales centre at 216 Riverfront Ave. SW (open daily from noon to 5 p.m., closed Fridays) or call 403-536-8802 for more information.



MAHOGANY STREET TOWNS

DUSTIN HOFFERT/DCPIX PHOTOGRAPHY

+ NEED TO KNOW

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Designer: Homes by Avi
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P.K. Subban weighed in on Pee-Kay vs. Pay-Kah: "Since we're changing the pronunciation of my name, just start calling me Denzel."

NHL IN BRIEF

Pens draw blanks vs. B's

Tuukka Rask stopped 34 shots for his fourth shut-out, Jimmy Hayes ended a 15-game goal-scoring drought and the Boston Bruins beat Pittsburgh 3-0 Wednesday night, keeping new Penguins coach Mike Sullivan winless after his first two games.

Max Talbot and Ryan Spooner also scored to help the Bruins improve to 9-1-3 in their last 13 games. Rask got his 30th career shutout and is 7-0-2 in his last nine starts.

Pittsburgh backup goalie Jeff Zatkoff had 26 saves as the Penguins lost for the seventh time in nine games (2-4-3).

Sullivan replaced fired coach Mike Johnston on Saturday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Holtby-led Caps beat Sens

Braden Holtby made 26 saves to help the Washington Capitals beat the Ottawa Senators 2-1 on Wednesday night.

Holtby lowered his NHL-best goals-against average to 1.83 and improved to 20-4-1. He has allowed three goals in his last three games, making 35 saves in a 2-1 victory at Tampa Bay on Saturday night and 44 in a 4-1 victory over Pittsburgh on Monday night.

Michael Latta opened the scoring in the first period and set up John Carlson's second-period goal. Bobby Ryan scored for Ottawa. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wides still on the schneid

THE HOCKEY NEWS

Brian Costello

I used to think there was a segment of Calgary's fan base that was being too tough on underappreciated Dennis Wideman. I don't think that anymore. In fact, I'm the new director of recruitment for that faction of Flames followers.

Wideman is spent. He's shot. He's lost it. His one-time boomer from the point hardly registers anymore. He barely moves his legs beyond the speed of coasting anymore. He's still mostly a lost cause in his own zone, except you don't need the word "mostly" anymore. One thing he is good at is watching the puck and getting in his goalie's way.

But that's just me. Watch him yourself. I focused in on him every shift in Nashville on Tuesday. On one break-out play, he literally stopped moving between the circles in his own zone. I had to check the pause button on my PVR thinking it was stuck. He was also the author of giveaway after giveaway in the Calgary zone, scrambled around stick-checking opponents and again didn't make a dent on the power play.

Sadly, it's been trending that way for many weeks now. Just what coach Bob Hartley sees in Wideman, I'm not. With Deryk Engelland and Ladislav Smid playing the best hockey of their Calgary



Defenceman Dennis Wideman, right, hasn't done much to help the Flames' cause this season, writes columnist Brian Costello. FRANK FRANKLIN II/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

careers, it should have been Wideman being the healthy scratch. Maybe a break can be the refresher "Wides" needs. Clearly he's not bringing it on the power play any-

more even though he gets more time than any other Flames defender — 3:04 per game.

When Wideman finished fourth in NHL defencemen

scoring last season with 56 points, his value was never higher. That was the time to deal the fading 32-year-old, who had two years at \$5.25 million remaining on his

+ SHOTS ON GOAL

Calgary newcomer Michael Frolik leads the team in shots per 60 minutes of ice time. Of the 526 most active NHLers this season, here's the league leader, the top three and bottom three Flames, and the player in last place.

1. Max Pacioretty, MTL, 14.02
12. Michael Frolik, 10.53
60. Micheal Ferland, 8.7
77. David Jones, 8.11
489. Kris Russell, 2.71
491. Dennis Wideman, 2.68
504. T.J. Brodie, 2.42
526. Scuderi, CHI, 1.52

contract.

Wideman has yet to score this season and only five of his 14 assists are primary ones. If there were limited buyers out there before, there are none now. The final year of his deal in 2016-17 will become toxic if Calgary has interest in retaining the likes of Jiri Hudler, David Jones, Kris Russell or bolstering their ranks with a UFA.

Best-case scenario: Calgary moves Wideman for anything. No return necessary. A summer buyout would cost the Flames \$1.75 million on the books the next two seasons, but open up \$3.5 million in cap space next year. That's a Plan B scenario. Worst-case scenario? Hartley keeps sending him over the boards.

NHL

Goaltenders willing to shed size for greater good

Like many of his counterparts, New Jersey Devils goalie Cory Schneider had an easy choice when presented with the option of larger nets or smaller equipment in the NHL's latest bid to boost goal-scoring.

Don't mess with the nets.

"Absolutely. I think we have to explore every avenue we can to maybe change the gear before we change the nets," Schneider said. "It would be like changing the size of the pucks."

Reducing the rubber isn't going to happen, but it appears the era of Michelin Man-like goalies

— outfitted with bulging chest and shoulder pads, and wearing pants 14 sizes too big — might be drawing to a close.

The NHL and the NHL Players Association are in discussions to standardize goalie gear based on a player's size. The proposed rules would regulate pants, all upper-body pads and potentially introduce a more form-fitting jersey.

Goalies would have their equipment approved by the NHL, rather than dealing directly with manufacturers as they do now.

This would be the next step in a process that began in 2013-14, when the league started regulating the length of goalie leg pads.

The objectives are to increase scoring, place more emphasis on a goalie's skill and es-

tablish a more even playing field.

"I think that's the biggest insecurity of goaltending: 'What's he doing that I'm not doing?' or, 'Why does he look so big and I look so small?'" said Schneider, who has played a role in the discussions. "I think it's natural that the gear should fit your body, and not you should fit the gear."

Talks will continue at the all-star game in Nashville next month. The new rules would have to be in place by Spring to allow time for the NHL to measure goalies and suppliers to manufacture the equipment

before next season.

Pekka Rinne is fine with whatever is decided.

"It's always something," the Predators goalie said. "I'm sure something's going to happen to the gear. But still, it doesn't matter. Goalies are going to be good, no matter what."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cory Schneider is all for reducing the size of goalie equipment rather than the net.

GETTY IMAGES





Jan Hudec was the first Canadian in 20 years to win an alpine skiing medal. DON EMMERT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Hudec out for season

SKIING

Calgary star rules out return until injury is rehabilitated

Jan Hudec's ski racing season is over before it began.

The Olympic bronze medalist in super-G in 2014 needs to treat and rehabilitate his problematic right knee.

Hudec had surgery in January on a torn meniscus that sidelined him last season. He returned to the Canada's alpine ski team for this season, but the 34-year-old Calgarian had a setback while training in Alberta in November. Hudec withdrew from the season-opening downhill World Cup in Lake Louise, Alta.

He pushed out of the start but in the super-G there, but didn't finish the race.

Hudec expects to undergo

knee surgery again next month, which will be the eighth time on his right knee. He intends to return for the 2016-17 season.

"After coming back from surgery in late January 2015, I felt great leading up to the first races of the 2015-16 season," Hudec said Wednesday in a statement from Alpine Canada.

"After a minor injury just days before the World Cup in Lake Louise, I had to re-evaluate my commitment to ski racing and my future as a competitor."

"After several meetings with ACA staff, trainers and the medical team, I have decided to sit this season out. It will give me a chance to get my knee repaired."

When he tied with American Bode Miller for super-G bronze at the 2014 Winter Games, Hudec was the first Canadian in 20 years to win an alpine ski medal. Hudec also won silver in men's downhill at the 2007 world championship.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

“It will give me a chance to get my knee repaired.”

Jan Hudec on his injury break

IN BRIEF

Frazier heading to South Side in 7-player swap

The White Sox were looking to add some pop while solidifying third base, and they are counting on Todd Frazier to provide it. The All-Star third baseman was acquired from the Cincinnati Reds on Wednesday as part of seven-player trade that also included the Los Angeles Dodgers. L.A. received outfielder

Trayce Thompson, right-hander Frankie Montas and second baseman Micah Johnson from the White Sox, and Cincinnati got infielders Brandon Dixon and Jose Peraza and outfielder Scott Schebler from the Dodgers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Todd Frazier
GETTY IMAGES

CFL

Orridge puts hold on coach moves after flurry

The Canadian Football League placed a moratorium on the movement of coaches between teams on Wednesday after reports that Montreal Alouettes defensive co-ordinator Noel Thorpe agreed to join the Edmonton Eskimos.

First-year commissioner Jeffrey Orridge sent a memo to CFL team presidents and general managers saying any movement of a coach already under contract will need the league's approval.

"Effective immediately, there will be a moratorium on any coaches' movement from one club to another club, unless such transaction is expressly approved in writing by the commissioner or his delegate, prior to the movement taking place. This only applies to coaches who are currently under contract with a CFL club," the memo read.

The move came with the league in apparent chaos after a flurry of movement, accusations of tampering and demands for compensation as coaches bolted one club for another.

It included Grey Cup champion head coach Chris Jones leaving the Eskimos to join the Saskatchewan Roughriders, taking all but one of his

staff with him. Eskimos GM Ed Hervey was fined by the league for bringing the league into "disrepute" for saying that tampering with other team's personnel is commonplace in the CFL.

On Wednesday, there were reports that Thorpe had resigned as Montreal's defensive co-ordinator and associate head coach even though he has two years left on his contract. He was expected to join Edmonton.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

5-13

The Alouettes' record last season under Noel Thorpe

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RECIPE French Onion Soup



PHOTO: MANA VISNTEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

You won't believe you made your favourite pub food and, better yet, you decide how high to croutons get piled.

Ready in

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 30 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients

- 2 onions, thinly sliced
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 2 Tbsp butter
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1 Tbsp fresh thyme
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 Tbsp flour
- 1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 4 cups beef stock
- Half a stick of baguette
- 1 cup grated Gruyère and Parmesan mixed

Directions

1. In a Dutch oven, melt butter and toss onion slices, garlic, sugar, thyme and pinch of salt and pepper. Cook over medium low heat for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring frequently, until onions soften.
2. Sprinkle the flour over the onion mixture and stir. Add the vinegar and a cup of stock. Stir well, scraping the bottom of the pot to deglaze. Add the rest of the stock and simmer for 10 minutes.
3. Turn your oven onto broil. Cut bread into 1-inch thick slices. Cut as many slices as bowls of soup you'll be serving. Lay them on a cookie sheet and now put a layer of the cheese mix on each piece. Broil in the oven until cheese melts and bread is golden brown.
4. Remove bread from oven and cut into pieces. Ladle the soup into bowls and top with a slice of bread's worth of croutons.

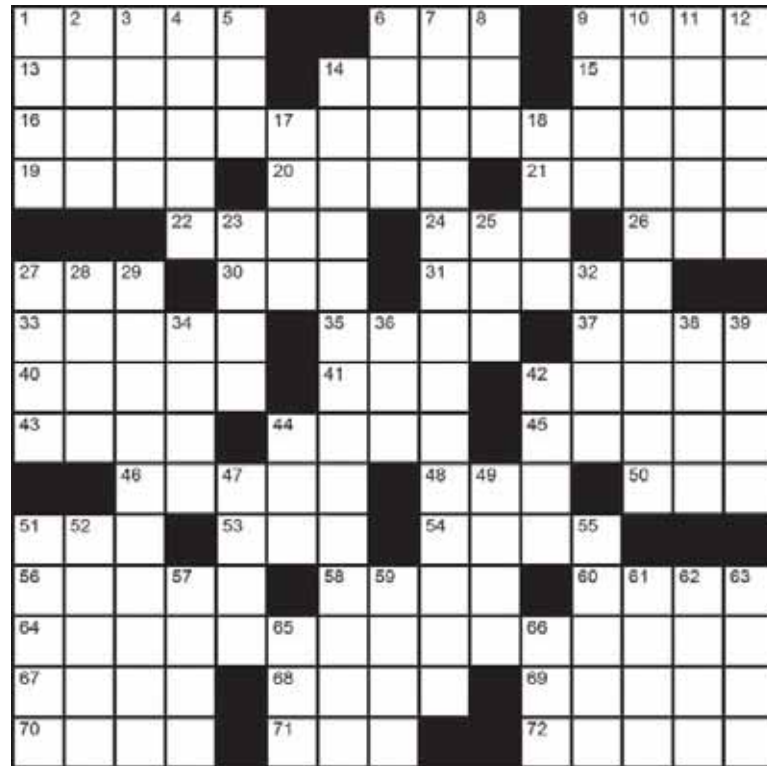
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CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN

ACROSS

1. Kate __ (Designer brand)
6. In past times
9. '___' Edmonton
13. 'Ripley's Believe It ___'
14. Ocean colour, en français
15. Thomas Augustine __: "Rule, Britannia" composer
16. Louisbourg... Does this in the 18th century on Cape Breton Island: 3 wds.
19. Buy and __, as stock
20. Jam in
21. Disconcerted
22. Concrete chunk
24. Use up
26. Tiny tallnesses
27. "20/20" network
30. __, hurry (Rushed)
31. Folklore fellow Tom
33. Writer's ache
35. Uncommon, to Caesar
37. Blunders
40. 6:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
41. Jackie O's hubby
42. Blood, __ & Tears
43. Greek portico
44. International oil gr.
45. As per #14-Down... "Peyton ___" (Primetime soap of the 1960s)
46. Extreme
48. Prior
50. Nature's morning coat
51. Ship-shaped table-



- ware ornament
53. Poetic preposition
54. Towel holders
56. "Over the Rainbow" co-composer Harold
58. Make a scarf
60. Nile wader
64. Newfoundland

- pudding Figgy Duff or Quebec meat pie Tourtiere, for example: 2 wds.
67. Forum outfit
68. Take __ the waist, as alterations: 2 wds.
69. "Home ___" (1990)
70. Original space

- matter
71. Grey hue
72. Outdoes

DOWN

1. Cries
2. Sister on "Charmed"
3. Indigo
4. As per #14-

- Down... "Valley of the ___" (1967)
5. Plane's take-off info
6. __ Romeo (Sports car)
7. Pom-pommed winterwear item in the Hudson's Bay Company Collection,

- Wool __ Tuque
8. Their-not
9. Wild West's Wyatt
10. Its aroma draws customers into the bakery each day: 2 wds.
11. Beginning
12. Breaks
14. Vancouver-born actress who starred on the show at #45-Across and in the movie at #4-Down: 2 wds.
17. Skim
18. Ballet skirt
23. Gloss-placing spots
25. "Gotchal"
27. Pretends
28. England denizen, e.g.
29. Soldier's disguise
32. Kitten's whimper
34. Recipe result
36. 'Hect' ending
38. Sprint
39. Brood
42. Accelerated
44. Portland's state, briefly
47. Ms. Collette
49. Oscar-winning composer Nino
51. Dapper
52. Mr. Flynn
55. Sashay
57. Cheese type
59. Old Testament sailor
61. Life stories, briefly
62. Fails to be
63. Tal Bachman's "___ So High"
65. Ms. Carrere
66. Sci. spot

★ IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
In your rush to get ahead of the game you may take on too much. You sometimes have the strength to do two or even three jobs at once but if you do too much now you may regret it later on. Slow down.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
If you stick your nose in other people's business you may regret it. Think how you would feel if others were to involve themselves in your private affairs without being invited.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Is family more important than work? That's the question you need to answer today. Eventually you'll find a stable balance between your home life and your more worldly ambitions.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Keep opinions to yourself. There's no point trying to persuade others to see things your way — they can't, it is beyond them. Go your own way. You don't need public support.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Keep your options open and listen to advice from people with expertise. You may not like to admit that others know best but in some areas they do and you should be big enough to acknowledge that fact.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You'll wish you were some place else today. But no matter how difficult the situation you have to face you'll conquer it before the day is over. You're tougher than you realize Virgo!

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
If your energy takes a nose-dive then stop what you're doing and take a break. Each hour you push yourself beyond your limits will take at least a day to recover. Be kind to yourself.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You can't seem to shake off the feeling that something bad is going to happen. Most likely it's all in your head but steer clear of situations you can't fully control. Just in case.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Material and professional success is not the most important thing in your life. What matters most now is that you take the opportunity to improve your domestic situation. Work can wait but loved ones cannot.

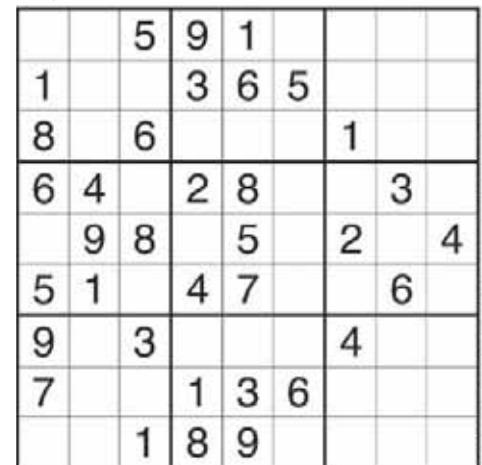
Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You may find it hard to get started today but once you do you'll amaze everyone by how quickly you get through your workload. Start early and the evening should be free for more enjoyable activities.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Resist the urge to point out other people's faults and failings. And don't cut corners or do anything underhand — or it could be your faults and failings that are made public.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
It's likely you will clash with someone in a position of authority. Stand your ground and refuse to be intimidated but also be ready to meet them halfway if they suggest a compromise.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9



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